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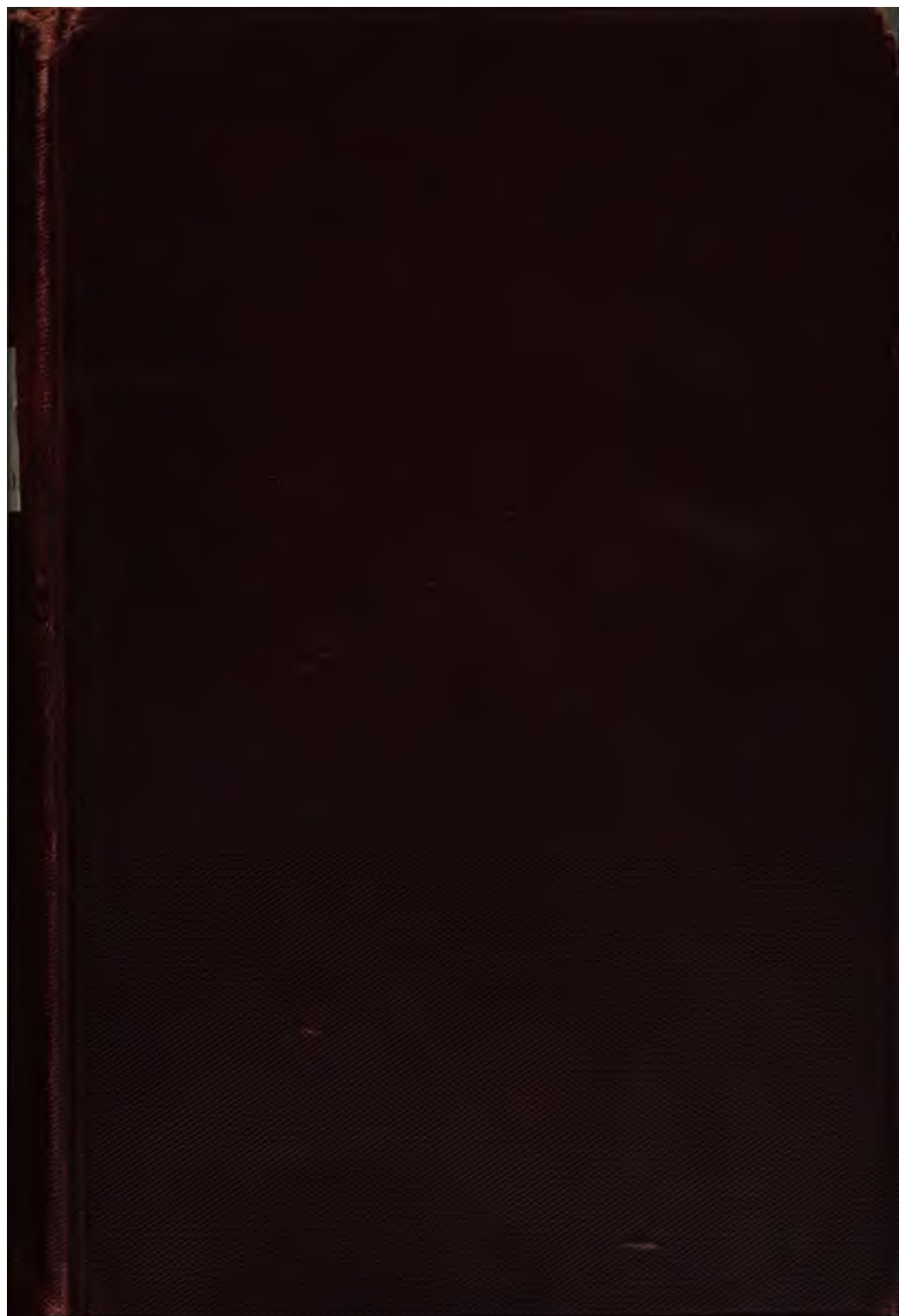
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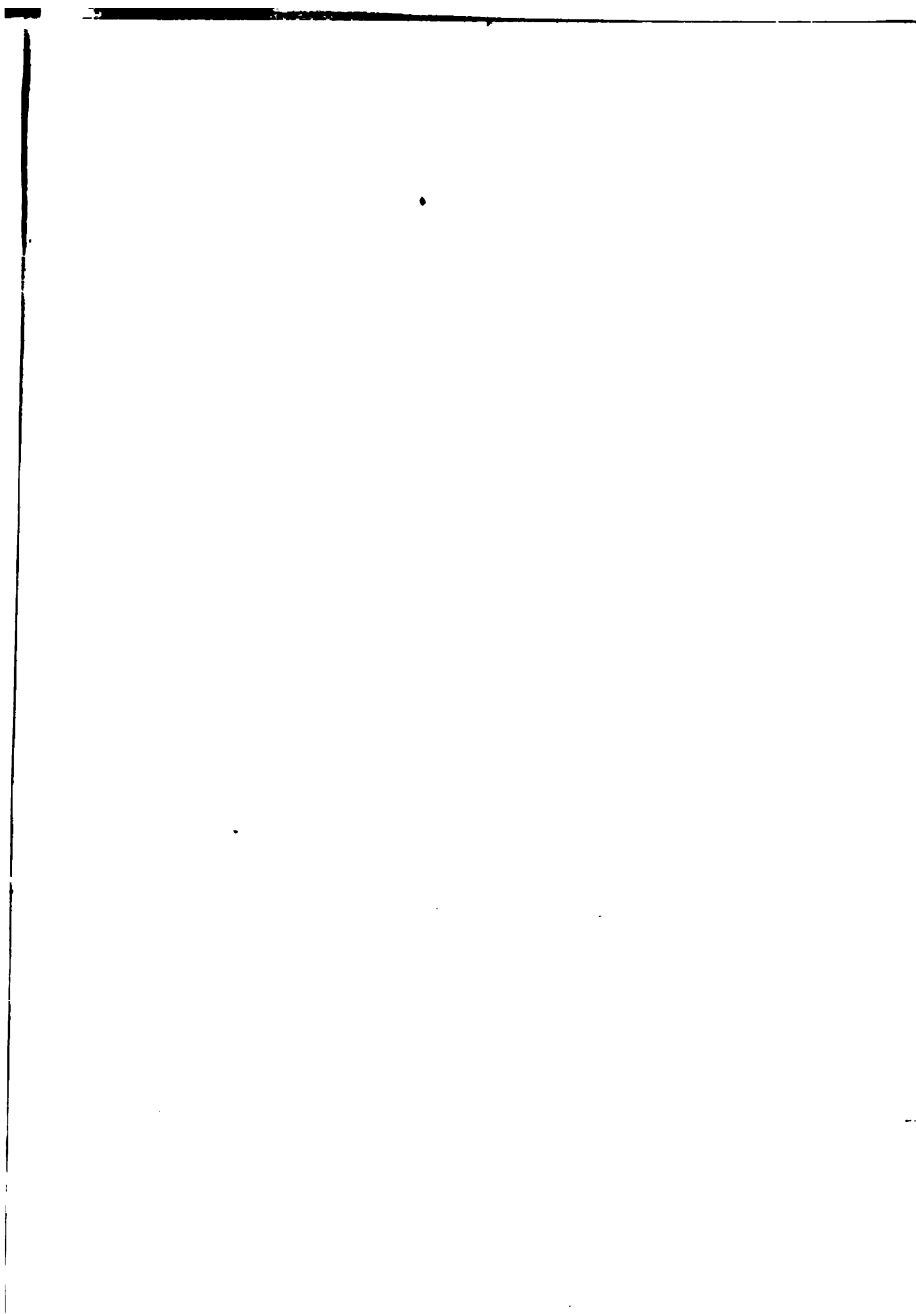
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A TRANSLATION OF DANTE'S
ELEVEN LETTERS

WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES AND
HISTORICAL COMMENTS

BY

CHARLES STERRETT LATHAM

EDITED BY

GEORGE RICE CARPENTER

WITH A PREFACE BY CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

Student's Edition



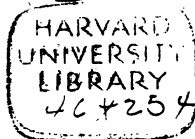
BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1891

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The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.
Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.

PREFACE.

THE work here printed was done under conditions which should be known to the reader.

In 1883 Mr. Latham, then a student in Harvard College, in the full flush of youth and health, was stricken by complete paralysis of his lower limbs. The blow was the heavier, because up to the time of his seizure he had been distinguished for physical vigor and activity. The attack put a sudden end to the enjoyments of youth, and to the hopes of life. All the resources of medical art were vain; and it became evident that there was hardly a chance even of partial recovery, that the prospect before him was of permanent bodily disability, and that his days were henceforth to be passed monotonously upon the bed, with the little variety of a change to the couch or the invalid's chair.

A common spirit might well have been subdued by such a calamity. Mr. Latham faced his fate with composure and determination. He determined not to be mastered by it.

It was in the autumn of 1885 that I heard from my friend Professor Child that he had seen Mr. Latham at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where he had spent the summer, and that he had been much interested in him by his cheerful fortitude and manly resolution. He had taken up his studies and was pursuing them so far as his strength allowed, with the hope of ultimately passing the examinations requisite for the attainment of the bachelor's degree.

A year or more later Mr. Latham asked to be enrolled as a member of the class under my instruction. It was arranged that notes on the lectures, and directions for reading, should be regularly sent to him; the stated examinations were held at his bedside, and his examination papers gave evidence not only of diligent and intelligent study, but also of such maturity of thought as was a natural result of the conditions of his life. In 1888 he had the satisfaction of obtaining his degree as of the Class of 1884.

One of the studies which he had taken up during the preceding year was that of Dante. In writing to ask for some special advice, he had said, "In this course I have had a very great amount of pleasure, and much hard work besides." And later, after obtaining his degree, he wrote: "Al-

though this year's work has been completed with a fair amount of success, I feel that my work has only just begun, as I have become very much interested in some of the subjects of study. I am very anxious to write for the Dante Prize, . . . and if I may be allowed to compete for it I should choose (out of the subjects proposed) the translation of Dante's Letters, with historical comments." Being encouraged to go on with this project, he wrote, in August, 1888: "I expect a great deal of pleasure from my work, and I am willing to work hard, if my health will only permit. I am just about to take up the study of German, in order to get back what I once knew, as I see that a knowledge of the language is indispensable. I hope that two or three months' faithful study may give me enough to enable me to read the necessary books." From time to time afterwards he wrote of the progress of his studies. There was never a word of complaint or repining in his letters. No one reading them without knowledge of the conditions under which they were written would have had a suspicion of what those conditions actually were. He was animated by the sense that he had entered into a competition with men of his own college standing who were in full enjoyment of health. He felt the stimulus

of work undertaken with a free choice and with a definite aim. The scope of his studies widened from month to month. "It is all absorbingly interesting," he wrote; "as soon as the books come from the Library I shall take them in hand, and hope soon to be able to report great strides." The books he was looking for were books from the library of Harvard College, without which he could hardly have accomplished his work. He was one of the many scholars in all parts of the country who, of late years, have rejoiced in and been grateful for that liberal administration of this great library which has enabled them to carry on studies otherwise impossible.

In a letter written at the end of January, 1889, from Washington, where he had established himself for the winter, Mr. Latham said: "For a number of weeks I have wished to tell you how my work progressed, and to consult you on some doubtful points, but since my arrival here on December first, after a short illness in New York, my health has been such as to prevent my doing anything for days at a time, and when I have felt well I have given all my energies to my translations and to the necessary reading. Now, however, I am glad to say that I am quite well again, and the work goes bravely on. . . . It is needless to say that I

am disappointed in my translations; that they fall far below what I had hoped to make them, but I am afraid I can do nothing to improve them." Again, early in April, after mentioning that his work had been interrupted by illness, and by an attack of neuralgia in his eyes which compelled him to give up reading or writing, and in fact deprived him of any desire to do either, he said: —

"Thus far I have made a finished translation of all the Letters, and have written comments to three of them, and would be prepared to write comments to as many more in a few days. My showing perhaps seems poor, but I have worked very hard, and what I have done has been as conscientious and painstaking as I knew how to make it. My comment on the letter to the Cardinal of Ostia comprises the entire history of the origin of the Bianchi and Neri and of their fight for supremacy, ending with the coming of the cardinal. It is long, but I could see no way of shortening it and making it comprehensible. The comment on the letter to the Counts Alberto and Guido da Romena is a summary of what others have found out, with a discussion as to whether the Alessandro mentioned by Maestro Adamo (Inf. xxx.) is the same to whom the letter of condolence refers, or another. In the comment to the letter to the Italian Cardinals I have given as concise an account as possible of the election of Clement V., the removal of the Apostolic See to Avignon, and the election of John XXII.

“My plan in regard to the other letters was as comprehensive. In regard to the letter to Moroello Malaspina I had determined to find out as much in regard to the family as I could, and to try to decide to which Moroello the letter is written, as there is some controversy in regard to this point. I have thought for some time that in the future I should like to write a few essays on the early Italian Poets, and it seemed to me that I could well begin my studies with the comment on the letter to Cino da Pistoia, which I should try to make critical to some extent, after giving the few biographical facts that I could collect.

“In regard to the letters about Henry VII. and his descent into Italy (v., vi., and vii., in Fraticelli's edition) I had made up my mind that it would be much better to write one continuous comment, giving a full account of what he did and of the state of Italy at the time, of his failure and vacillation and final death. Do you not think this a much better method than trying to divide the comment into three?

“I wish to discuss the genuineness of the letter to Guido da Polenta, to give some points in regard to Venice at the time to show that its condition was not so barbarous as the letter would lead one to suppose, and to say something in regard to Guido, as also in regard to the date of the letter.

“The comment to the letter to the Florentine friend is to be made up of an account of the various decrees against Dante; and I thought it would be well to gather these bodily in an appendix.

“The comment to the letter to Cangrande is to give an account of the Scaligeri, of the court of Cangrande, and of what is known of Dante’s sojourn there.”

There is little need to dwell on the character displayed in the passages I have cited from Mr. Latham’s letters. Their more intimate portions gave the most touching evidence of modesty, and of gratitude for the little that could be done to assist and encourage him in his work.

He spent the summer of 1889 at Medford. His health seemed to be improving, and in the early autumn he was able twice to come to Cambridge. We had not met before. I was greatly struck with his personal appearance and bearing. His aspect as he sat in his carriage was of a man in health, and his talk was free and cheerful, as of one in full enjoyment of life. On one of his visits he took occasion to say, with entire simplicity and directness, that he had learned to look upon his great calamity as a blessing in disguise, that he did not repine at being cut off from the usual course of life, that he believed that his deprivation had been the means of giving him a truer conception than he might otherwise have gained of the right use and ends of life, that he was sure that it had quickened and deepened within him the desire of self-improvement, and had secured for him intellectual re-

sources and delights far greater than had he been blessed with health he should have been likely to obtain. "When I compare myself with other men of my own age and standing," he said, "I am confident that I am happier than most of them, and not less well employed." He looked forward with determination and courage to the future, and the prospect before him was not dark.

He seemed so well that I anticipated for him a long period of cheerful and useful employment. But in the following winter his constitution gave way under the strain imposed upon it. The bone of one of his legs broke, and the healing was accomplished with difficulty. He suffered much. In the intervals of comparative relief from pain and weakness he continued his work, and he was able in May to submit it nearly complete to the committee of the Dante Society in whose hands was the allotment of the prize for which he had striven. The work was so comprehensive that the judgment of it required time. The conclusion of it had left him exhausted. The physicians ordered a change of air for him. He was taken to Virginia, but he did not revive, and he was then advised to come to the North. The journey was easily effected, but he reached Boston very ill, and a day or two after his arrival he sank, and died on the 21st of July. It

is a lasting source of regret that he had not learned the unanimous decision of the Committee awarding to him the prize for which he had striven, and which he had ardently desired.

Just before writing these last words I happened upon a sentence of Seneca's which seems to me to form an apposite close to this brief record of Mr. Latham's later years: *Semper contra fortunam luctata virtus etiam citra effectum propositi operis enituit.*

C. E. NORTON.

CAMBRIDGE, *March*, 1891.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

IT has been my privilege to prepare for publication the work on which, with a fervor beyond his strength, my friend concentrated the last two years of his life. I have felt it my sole duty to present this work with as few changes as possible, as a memorial of him, and as a record both of his scholarship and its results. To change what he wrote — except by the verbal emendations of a proof-reader — or to add to it, would have been to make by just so much the record less faithful and the memorial less unique. Certain changes, however, beside the correction of the errors of detail that necessarily occur in a work of such scope, conceived and elaborated under such harassing circumstances, I have permitted myself. Quotations from Italian or Latin authors I have as a rule given in English. For the “Divine Comedy” I used Mr. Longfellow’s translation; for the “Convito” Miss Hillard’s. For other quotations I have either chosen a trustworthy translation or supplied a version my-

self. I have also added here and there in brackets slight explanatory notes, and I have in a measure fulfilled my friend's plan by selecting from the "Divine Comedy" appropriate mottoes for the various comments.

In the Appendix I have briefly stated the main points in the discussion about the authenticity of some of the letters, for I am convinced that with some such statement Mr. Latham meant to introduce his work. Mr. Latham also meant to reprint in an appendix the various Florentine decrees against Dante. The interested reader will find them excellently collected in Signor Del Lungo's "*Dell' esilio di Dante.*" To reproduce them here without the comment with which my friend meant to accompany them would be inappropriate.

G. R. CARPENTER.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY,
June, 1891.

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DANTE'S LETTERS.

LETTER I.

To the most reverend Father in Christ, to the most beloved of their lords, the Lord Nicolas, by the grace of heaven Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, Legate of the Apostolic See, and also ordained by Holy Church peacemaker in Tuscany, Romagna and the Maremma, and in the lands and regions lying adjacent, his most obedient sons, Alessandro, Captain, the Council and Corporation of the party of the Bianchi of Florence, commend themselves most loyally and zealously.

1. HAVING been admonished by salutary precepts and entreated by Apostolic compassion, we respond to the series of holy messages which you have sent, after counsels dear to us. And if on account of excess of tardiness we should be adjudged guilty of negligence or slothfulness, may your holy discretion¹ prevail over your judgments, taking into consideration how great and what kind of counsels

¹ Cf. *Convito*, *Trat. i. cap. 11*: "The first [cause] is intellectual blindness (*cechità di discrezione*). . . . Of the first we may reason thus: As the sensitive part of the soul has its eyes, by

and answers are necessary to our party, in order that, proceeding fittingly, it may maintain the fidelity of fellowship. But if, peradventure, after examining the matters on which we touch, we may

which it perceives the difference in things, as to their external coloring; so the rational part has its eye, by which it perceives the difference in things as to their adaptation to a certain end, and this is discernment (*discrezione*). And as he who is blind in the eyes of sense always follows the lead of others, for evil or good; so he who is blind to the light of discernment, always, in his judgments, follows the popular voice, whether it be right or wrong. . . . Of the use of this light of discernment the common people especially are deprived, because, occupied from the beginning of their lives in some trade, their mind is so absorbed in that by force of necessity, that they are capable of understanding nothing else. And because the habit of virtue, whether moral or intellectual, cannot be acquired suddenly, but must be the result of long custom, and they are altogether devoted to some trade, and care nothing to know other things, it is impossible for them to have discernment. Whence it happens that they often cry, 'Long life!' to [that which is] their death, or, 'Death!' to [that which is] their life, provided that somebody begins it. And this is a most dangerous effect of their blindness. Wherefore Boëthius pronounced popular glory to be vain, because he saw that it was without discernment."

Also cf. *Convito*, *Trat. iv. cap. 8*:

"The most beautiful branch that springs from the root of reason is *discernment*. For as [St.] Thomas says, in the *Prologue to the Ethics*, to understand the relation of one thing to another is the special act of reason; and this is discernment."

Also cf. *Letter XI. 2*:

"But the ignorance of the herd formeth judgments without discretion; and even as it thinketh the sun is a foot in magnitude, so in regard to one thing and the other it is deceived by its credulity."

seem to have been wanting in due celerity, we supplicate that the superabundance of your goodness may be indulgent to us.

2. As not ungrateful sons, therefore, did we behold the letter of your paternal solicitude, which, consonant with the beginning of all our desires, forthwith filled our minds with so great a joy that no one could measure it either in word or thought; for the course of your letter promises more than once, under paternal admonitions, that welfare which we, wellnigh beside ourselves in our desire for it, coveted for our country. For what else did we rush into civil war? What else did our white banners seek? To what other end were our swords and lances reddened, unless that those who had mutilated the civil laws in foolhardy enjoyment should submit their necks to the yoke of righteous legislation, and be compelled to maintain the peace of the country? In truth, the legitimate barb of our intention, flying forth from the thong that we have stretched,¹ sought, seeks, and will seek in the future, only the quiet and liberty of the Florentine

¹ Cf. *Purg.* xxv. 17, 18:

“Let fly

The bow of speech thou to the barb hast drawn.”

Also *Purg.* xxxi. 16-19:

“Even as a cross-bow breaks, when 't is discharged
Too tensely drawn, the bowstring and the bow,
And with less force the arrow hits the mark,
So I give way beneath that heavy burden.”

people. But if you watch over our rights so gratefully to us, and strive to lead our adversaries back to the furrows of good citizenship in such a way as our sacred endeavors wished, who will attempt to return meet thanks to you? Neither does it lie in our power, O father, nor in that of whatever of the Florentine people is to be found on earth; but if in heaven there is any piety which provides a reward for such deeds, may it bestow a suitable recompense upon you,¹ — upon you who have put on compassion for so great a city, and hasten to allay the profane quarrels of the citizens.

3. Surely, since Frate L., a man of earnest piety, a promoter of policy and peace, admonished us and earnestly entreated us for you, even as your letter did also, to cease from every assault and practice of warfare, and to deliver ourselves entirely into your paternal hands, we, as your most devoted sons, and lovers of peace and justice, having now sheathed our swords, submit ourselves to your guidance with ready and sincere good will, as will be set forth in the answer of your messenger, the aforesaid Frate L., and as will be made clear in public documents solemnly proclaimed.

4. Therefore we supplicate in a filial tone, and with the greatest affection, your merciful compassion, praying that you may be willing to pour down upon that Florence, now overwrought for so long

¹ This passage is a direct paraphrase of the *Æneid*, i. 600–605.

a time, the sleep of tranquillity and peace; and that like a compassionate father, you may hold us, who are always the defenders of her people, and those who are of our party, as intrusted to your protection, who, as we have never been deficient in love of country, intend in like manner never to deviate from the limitations of your precepts, but always to render an obedience as loyal as dutiful to whatever it may please you to command.

COMMENT ON LETTER I.

A CHAPTER OF FLORENTINE HISTORY.

The citizens of the divided city.

Inferno, vi. 61.

THE beginning of the year 1300 found all Italy at peace; for the time being arms were laid aside and the care of the soul became paramount. The roads were thronged with people who, in obedience to the mandate of Boniface VIII., flocked to Rome from all parts of the world to receive absolution for their sins, and to lay their tributes at the feet of that proud and ambitious pontiff. Florence is described as never having been in a more prosperous condition, excelling in the number of its inhabitants as well as in riches and influence, and ruling nearly the whole of Tuscany. But, says Villani,¹ this great prosperity brought forth pride

¹ *Cronica*, viii. 39.

and corruption, by which the feasts and pleasures of the Florentines, who up to that time had been wont to enjoy many delights, were brought to an end ; for the seeds had already been sown, which, no later than the spring, should yield such a harvest of discord and oppression as to make the time that had gone before seem doubly bright by contrast.

In the Sesto di Porta San Piero there lived two families, from whose envy of each other, which soon burst into hatred and bloodshed, were to come all the misfortunes of the following years. The Cerchi, at whose head was Messer Vieri, a man of whom the chroniclers have little to say, except that he was of little malice and no speaker, were rich and powerful merchants, with a great number of clients ; but they were of ignoble birth, unpolished and uncultivated, as people are apt to be who have risen from small beginnings to great power and influence. The Donati, on the other hand, were soldiers and of noble blood, but were not as rich as their neighbors ; and this was probably one cause of their envy of and hatred for the Cerchi, who had lately bought the palace of the Counts Guidi in their vicinity, and who outshone them in pomp and display. Corso, the head of the family, was a very different man from the good-natured and easy-going, if perhaps rather weak, Vieri de' Cerchi. He is described as having great personal

beauty and a gracious manner, but he was selfish, ambitious, and more cruel than Catiline, with a mind always intent on evil.¹ If the Cerchi had excited the envy of the Donati, the Donati had roused the hatred of the Cerchi, for on the death of his wife, Corso had married the daughter of Messer Accirrito da Gaville, an heiress,—much against the will of her relatives, the Cerchi, who tried to prevent the union, and thus gave rise to much scandal and danger, both to the city and to special persons.²

Thus the hatred of these two families grew from day to day, when, as if to add new fuel to the flame, the two branches of the Cancellieri were introduced into the city from Pistoia, which seems to have excelled itself in doing ill on this occasion,³ since from it the new factions of Bianchi and Neri were to take their rise. The Cancellieri were descended from Ser Cancelliere, a rich merchant, who, being twice married, had many sons, who became rich knights and worthy men. These in turn had many sons, so that at the end of the thirteenth century they counted more than a hundred

¹ Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 96; Dino Compagni, iii. 21. It is well to take the statements of this chronicle with great caution, as in its present form there can be small doubt that it dates from the fifteenth century. It is principally valuable for the vivid and lifelike portraits it gives of some contemporaries.

² Dino Compagni, i. 20.

³ *Inf.* xxv. 10-12.

men-at-arms, and were not only the greatest family in Pistoia, but one of the greatest in all Tuscany. But, as usual, their prosperity produced envy and hatred; and the descendants of one wife, who is said to have been called Bianca, from which the faction took its name, came to odds with those of the other wife, who in contradistinction took the name of Neri. At last they came to blows, and one of the Bianchi was wounded. The Neri, that they might be at peace with their kinsmen, sent the one who had inflicted the wound to ask pardon, and begged that the Bianchi should take what vengeance they chose, which they, having neither pity nor mercy, did by cutting off his hand. Forthwith all Pistoia was divided between the two parties. The older party names, Guelph and Ghibelline, were forgotten. Murders, fights among the citizens, and evils of all kinds resulted. At this point the Florentines, who feared that the supremacy of the Guelphs would be destroyed, assumed the dictatorship of the city, with the consent of the Pistoiese, and ill-advisedly sent the heads of both factions to Florence, with the hope of reconciling them. The Cancellieri Neri went to the house of the Frescobaldi, who were friends of the Donati; the Cancellieri Bianchi to that of the Cerchi, who were their relatives; and thus the Donati became the head of the Neri, and the Cerchi of the Bianchi faction.¹

¹ Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 33.

It is not strange that in an age when passions were so unbridled, when personal animosity ran so high, when cruelty was rather the rule than the exception, that the factions, whether Guelph and Ghibelline or Neri and Bianchi, with which the cities of Italy were rent, should take their rise from the private feuds of two powerful families, rather than from any great principles that were involved ; principles were a matter of secondary consideration and followed later on, when one faction invariably ranged itself on the side of the Pope, the other on that of the emperor. As in 1215 the feud between the Buondelmonti and the Amidei had given rise to the factions of Guelph and Ghibelline, so now the quarrel between the Cerchi and the Donati made it possible for the Bianchi and the Neri to find a foothold in Florence. The new factions, which were caused primarily by envy and the desire for power, divided all Florence anew, tore asunder families and neighbors, and separated the Guelph party into its two main elements. The Neri, or pure Guelphs, with the Donati and Pazzi at their head, was the party of the nobles, and in this differed from that of the Guelphs in other cities, which as a rule was made up of *popolani*. It comprised all those, Guelph nobles and others, who wished to restrict the government to a few, and to repress the people ; it was the party of revolution, and sought to overthrow the

existing government and laws, and looked to the Pope as its head. The Bianchi, on the other hand, was the party of moderation, and during its short supremacy was guilty of no excesses; it was the party of the people in a government of the people, and sought to preserve the liberty and equality of the Florentines. Its following was so great that it held the government of the city almost entirely in its hands, and had its leaders, the Cerchi, been men of such ambition and capacity as the Donati, there can be little doubt that the contest would have resulted differently. For the Cerchi were popular with all classes: with the *popolani* on account of their wealth and because they did not seek to grind them down; with the Ghibellines, because they were not too severe when in power; with the plebeians, or *popolo minuto*, because they were much opposed to the banishment of Giano della Bella, and lately because it was discovered that, deserting the councils of the Guelphs, they sided more and more with the people and the Signoria. Many citizens and powerful families thus enrolled themselves under the banners of the Cerchi. Among these were Dante, his "first friend" — Guido Cavalcanti, — Dino Compagni, and, in fact, all who desired peace and equality.¹

Thus far the hatred of the two parties, which had

¹ Dino Compagni, i. 20, 21; Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 39; Gino Capponi, *Storia di Firenze*, vol. i. bk. ii. chap. 4.

been growing hotter and hotter during these first months of 1300, had shown itself only in insults of one sort or another, or in sarcasms from Corso, who delighted to call his less brilliant rival *l'asino di Porta*, on account of his poor oratory. Vieri, at the instigation of the Guelphs, who feared that the Bianchi would unite with the Ghibellines, had been sent for by Boniface VIII., who offered him temporal and spiritual blessings if he would be reconciled with his rivals, and was highly incensed when the former departed, saying that he had no quarrel with any one. But on the evening of the first of May, when according to ancient custom all Florence was making merry, and the streets were thronged with bands of young men and maidens, who filled the air with the sounds of music and laughter, the first blood was shed, and that night the whole city was in arms. It happened that, as a dance of women was going on in the Piazza di Santa Trinità, two mounted bands of young Cerchi and Donati, who were going about the city armed and ready for an encounter, met, grew angry, and began to spur their horses against each other. From this a great quarrel and *mêlée* arose, many were wounded, and Ricoverino, the son of Ricovero de' Cerchi, had his nose severed from his face. This, says Villani,¹ was the beginning of the factions of the Bianchi and the Neri, from which such great and evil con-

¹ *Cronica*, viii. 39.

sequences ensued to the Guelphs and Ghibellines, to all Florence, and even to the whole of Italy.

It must have been at this time, or perhaps later, that many of the Donati and Cerchi went to attend a funeral in the Piazza de' Frescobaldi. It was the custom at such gatherings for the citizens to sit on the ground on rush mats, while those of higher rank, cavaliers and doctors, sat above them on benches. On this occasion it happened that many of the plebeian followers of the Cerchi and Donati were seated opposite each other. One of them, either to arrange his clothes or for some other purpose, stood up. Straightway those opposite him, full of suspicion, stood up also, and laid their hands to their swords. This threw the whole assembly into confusion, and the city was up in arms once more. Each one fled to his own house and gathered together his followers. A band of the Cerchi, among whom was Guido Cavalcanti, — a bitter enemy of Corso Donati, according to Dino Compagni, — with a number of followers on horse and foot, rushed to the house of the Donati in the Porta San Piero, but not finding them, proceeded to San Piero Maggiore, where Corso Donati had gathered together some of his friends. The two bands immediately fell upon each other, and the Cerchi were shamefully repulsed and put to flight. For this both parties were punished by the commune. It was not long after this that some of the

Cerchi, who had been on their estates at Nepozzano and Pugliano, were set upon as they were returning to Florence by a band of the Donati, who had gathered together at Remoli; and some of each party were wounded. Again each side was accused by the commune and condemned to pay a fine; and the Donati, who were for the most part poor, were imprisoned for non-payment. The Cerchi, fearing that through the arts of their adversaries they might be ruined in paying fines, followed their example, against the advice of Vieri and others of their house, who knew the constitution and delicacy of their young men. And thus they also went to prison, where four of them died shortly after eating a pork pie, which had been given them by Neri Abati, the governor of the prison, who, although he had undoubtedly poisoned them, was never brought to justice, but lived to commit still greater crimes.¹

During all this time, while the new factions were forming in Florence, which were to produce such an absolute, such an unexpected change in Dante's whole life, we catch no glimpse at all of him, and it is not known whether he was in Florence or not. It has been conjectured² that he was in Rome taking part in the Jubilee. But wherever he may have been at this time, it is certain that he was in

¹ See Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 71.

² Balbo, *Vita di Dante*, bk. i. chap. 10.

Florence on the fifteenth day of June, when with Noffo di Guido Buonafedi, Neri di Messer Jacopo del giudice Alberti, Nello di Arrighetto Doni, Bindo di Donato Bilenchi, and Ricco Falconetti, as colleagues, with Fazio da Micciole as *gonfaloniere*, and with Ser Aldobrandino d' Ugguccione da Campi as secretary, he entered upon his priorate. In regard to this event he says, in a letter quoted by Leonardo Bruni but now lost: "All my woes and misfortunes had their cause and beginning in my unlucky election to the priorate, of which, though I was not on the score of prudence worthy, nevertheless, on the score of fidelity and age I was not unworthy."

The one event which we can be sure took place during Dante's term of office was the coming to Florence of the Cardinal Matteo d' Acquasparta, whom Boniface had sent as his legate, at the instigation of the captains and council of the Guelphs, who feared that through the constant discords of the Bianchi and Neri the Ghibellines would again come into power. This indeed seemed very likely, both on account of the good behavior of the Ghibellines, and from the fact that many of them, who were held good men, had already been elected to office. The cardinal arrived in June and was received by the Florentines with all the honor due to his high office. But when he asked for full power to reconcile the Florentines and, in order to do

away with the factions of Bianchi and Neri, wished to make reforms, to change the manner of electing the priors, and to divide the offices and honors equally between both parties, the Bianchi, who held the Signoria in their hands, fearing lest they should lose their power and be deceived by the Pope and his legate, were obdurate, and flatly refused to yield him obedience.¹ That they were justified in their suspicion of the cardinal was amply proved by the events which immediately followed, while he was still in Florence.

On the eve of Saint John, as the various guilds, preceded by their consuls, were on their way to offer prayers at San Giovanni, as was their custom, they were set upon and beaten by certain *grandi*, who cried : “ We are they who defeated the enemy at Campaldino, and you have deprived us of the offices and honors of our city.” Upon this the priors took counsel with some of the citizens, among whom was Dino Compagni, and it was determined to banish the heads of each party. Of the Donati, Corso and Sinibaldo Donati, Rosso and Rossellino della Tosa, Giachinotto and Pazzo de’ Pazzi, Geri Spini, Porco Manieri, and some others, were banished to the Castel della Pieve ; of the Cerchi, Gentile, Torrigiano, and Carbone de’ Cerchi, Guido Cavalcanti, Baschiera della Tosa, Baldinaccio Adimari, Naldo Gherardini, and others, were ban-

¹ Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 40.

ished to Sarzana, whither they went immediately. But perhaps because Vieri, the head of the opposite party, was not banished and Corso, the head of the Donati, was, the Donati were not willing to yield obedience; "and," says Dino, "if they had not obeyed and had taken arms, they would that day have taken the city." For the Lucchese, with the knowledge of the cardinal, were hastening to their aid with a large army, and turned back only on being threatened by the priors. The designs of the cardinal were thus clearly revealed to them, and it was evident that the peace that he sought was to abase the party of the Cerchi and exalt that of the Donati. When this was understood, many turned against him, and some one shot an arrow in at the window of the bishop's palace, where he had taken up his residence, and so terrified him that he removed to the house of Tommaso de' Mozzi in Oltrarno, and later retired from the city, leaving it under an interdict.¹

After the departure of the Pope's legate, the government of the city seems to have come entirely into the hands of the Bianchi; for those who had been banished to Sarzana were soon recalled, on account of the unhealthiness of the place. Guido Cavalcanti, indeed, came back ill, and died on the 27th or 28th of August of the same year.²

¹ Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni*, i. pp. 181, 182.

² It is impossible to be certain in regard to the chronology of

The Neri also were soon recalled from banishment, with the exception of Corso Donati, who had broken from his place of exile, and had gone to Rome or Anagni, where the Pope was, to induce him to send some prince of the house of France to reinstate his party in power. On his return from Florence the Cardinal d' Acquasparta had given an account of the state of affairs there; and it may be supposed that Boniface listened with no unwilling ear to Corso, who was seconded by the prayers and petitions of the captains of the Guelphs, and of the Spini, the Pope's bankers and advisers. They represented that the city had once more come into the power of the Ghibellines, and would, moreover, become a stronghold of the Colonna, his especial enemies; so Boniface promised to lend them the aid of Charles of Valois, the brother of Philip the Fair, who had left France in order to

some of the events of this year. Villani, who is usually the safest guide in this particular, places the disturbance at the funeral in the Palazzo Frescobaldi in the month of December, after the coming of Cardinal d' Acquasparta. He also says that the heads of both parties were banished after the conspiracy of Santa Trinità. Although in this instance he assigns no date, it might be supposed from the number of the chapter that the event occurred in the spring of 1301. The banishment of the heads of both parties must have taken place during Dante's priorate, as it is now proved that Guido Cavalcanti died on the 27th or 28th of August, 1300. See Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni*, vol. ii. p. 98 [cf. also *ibid.* vol. ii. p. 110, n. 16, and p. 114, n. 23].

join Charles of Naples in an expedition against Philip of Aragon.¹

In the meantime the leaders of the Neri, the captains of the Guelphs, and many citizens, had met in the church of Santa Trinità to devise some means of regaining their ascendancy in the city; but the plot was discovered, and for a second time the leaders of the party of the Donati were banished. While the times were becoming more and more troublous, we still find Dante appearing several times in public affairs. On the 13th and 14th of April, 1301, he voted in the Council of the *Capitadini* (heads of Arts) and other *Sapientes* on the manner of the election of the Signoria; the 28th of April, 1301, by a decree of six officials of Florentine streets, he and a notary, Ser Guglielmo della Piagentina, were intrusted with enlarging and restoring the street of San Procolo from Borgo della Piagentina to the little stream of the Affrico. On June 19, 1301, in two meetings of the Council of the Hundred he voted against granting the Pope the auxiliary troop of one hundred soldiers for which he had asked. This vote, which was in the minority, was afterwards used as an accusation against Dante. On the 13th of September he again voted, whether in the affirmative or negative it is not known, in the assembly of all the councils, on the measure to be taken for the maintenance of

¹ Villani, viii. 43; Dino Compagni, ii. 3.

the Ordinances of Justice and the Statutes of the People.¹

When rumors of what had taken place in Rome reached Florence, there was great consternation among the people, and especially among the Bianchi, who held the government of the city completely in their hands, and feared that the arrival of Charles would at least compel them to divide the offices with the Neri, even if they did not lose their offices altogether and were not driven from the city.²

¹ See Gaspari, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. i. pp. 238, 239; also, for the documents, Fraticelli, *Vita di Dante*, chap. 5, notes and illustrations, pp. 135 ff.

² It has been the custom of historians and biographers to state that the Bianchi sent ambassadors, among whom was Dante, to Rome, between the middle of September and the first of October, to intercede with Boniface. But in recent years grave doubts have arisen in regard to the embassy, and especially in regard to Dante's share in it. The only one among the contemporary chroniclers who mentions the embassy at all is Dino Compagni; and he does not say positively that Dante was one of the three ambassadors sent. From the fact that he mentions only *two* names, and several pages farther on, in giving a list of those who were banished in April, 1302, names Dante, *che era imbasciadore a Roma*, the story has grown. Boccaccio hints at such an embassy. He does not, however, say that one *was* sent, but merely that the heads of the party considered that one *ought* to be sent, — *provedero, che ambasceria si dovesse mandare al papa*, — and that Dante should be chosen its leader. The story certainly offers a most interesting commentary upon the slender sources from which historians often draw to make up a connected narrative. For Leonardo Bruni, writing in the fifteenth century, it has already

In the month of September, 1301, Charles of Valois arrived at Anagni, whither Charles II. had also come to meet him, was received with due honor by the Pope and the cardinals, and was forthwith made Count of Romagna. After due consultation it was readily arranged that the expedition to Sicily, which had been the principal cause of his coming from France, should be delayed until the following spring; and Boniface, who had not forgotten his wrath against the Bianchi and his promises to Corso and his party, ordered him to proceed forthwith to Florence, which in his journey from Lucca to Anagni he had passed by without entering, and in addition to his other titles made him Pacifier of Tuscany. Accordingly, on All Saints' Day, 1301, Charles of Valois made his entry into Florence, with his band of five hundred Frenchmen, greatly increased by those, exiles and others, who had joined him from Tuscany, Romagna, and Florence. While Charles was still at Siena, on his

become an assured fact. He says, "At this time Dante was not in Florence, but at Rome, where he had been sent shortly before as ambassador to the Pope, to offer the harmony and peace of the citizens." One biographer after another has followed in his steps, until in the present century Troya (*Veltro allegorico di Dante*) has gone so far as to give the arguments that Dante used with Boniface. For a complete argument against the probability of such an embassy having been sent, see Bartoli, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. v. Appendix; also, Scartazzini's *Handbook to Dante*, Davidson's translation, pp. 80-83.

way from Anagni, the priors had been very suspicious of his coming, and many consultations had been held as to whether he should be admitted to the city or not. Ambassadors had finally been sent to him. He had answered with fair and friendly words, that he came for their well-being and to bring peace among them, and he had sworn that he would acquire no jurisdiction over Florence, that he would assume none of the offices or honors of the city, either in the name of the empire or in any other way, and that he would not change any of its laws or customs. The Florentines now went forth to meet him and to do him honor, with banners flying and with horses caparisoned with silk and cloth of gold. Viewed in the light of the events that now followed in such quick succession, there is something ghastly about his entry. Underneath all the display, all the feigned joy at his coming, the citizens were full of fear and suspicion, which were ready to break forth at any moment.

The city was weakly governed. The priors, among whom was Dino Compagni, though good men and above suspicion, were not equal to the exigencies of the times. Their policy was vacillating; they seem to have been without a leader, and were entirely unable to cope with Boniface and Charles of Valois. They spent their time in consultation when prompt action was all that could

have saved the city. In order not to be suspected, they called a council of forty citizens of both parties, which instead of aiding them only made matters worse. Those who were evil-minded bid not speak, and the others had lost courage ; some held the floor while talking foolishly ; some spent the time in blaming the priors ; and some wished them deposed from office and others put in their place. In the mean time Charles, who had refused to accept the quarters usually assigned to princes and people of distinction when they visited Florence, had gone to the house of the Frescobaldi in Oltrarno.

On the 5th of November the podestà, captain, priors, all the councilors, the Bishop of Florence, and all the people of note, gathered in the church of Santa Maria Novella, and after some debate concluded to confide to Charles the care and government of the city, with authority to reconcile the Bianchi and Neri factions of the Guelphs. He on his side accepted, and swore, as the son of a king, to preserve the city in a good and peaceful condition. But even as he swore he perjured himself, for, by the advice of Musciatto Franzesi, a Florentine who had come with him from France, his people, who had thus far gone without arms, were now armed. Forthwith fear and suspicion, which had been smouldering so long, broke forth ; *grandi* and *popolani* flew to arms ; each house was forti-

fied and garrisoned ; and the city was barricaded in many places. The bell on the palace of the priors tolled in vain ; not a single one of the Cerchi was to be seen either on foot or horseback. Two of the Adimari, with their followers, alone answered the summons ; but finding no one, they retired, leaving the *piazza* deserted.

To make the confusion complete Corso Donati returned from banishment at this point, with the connivance of Lackland,¹ and with a band of friends and followers broke into the city, aided by friends within the walls. Schiatta de' Cancellieri, the captain of the three hundred horse, hearing of his coming, wished to take him. Vieri de' Cerchi, however, who is mentioned but once in all this troublous time, objected, and, relying on his people, said, "Let him come." In the meantime crying, "*Viva, Messer Corso e'l barone!*" the people flocked to Donati's side. He, seeing his power and following, which increased at each moment, rushed forthwith to the prisons and released the prisoners ; then to the palace of the podestà ; then to that of the priors, and compelled them to lay down their authority and return to their houses. The criminals, evil-doers of all kinds, and the exiles who were in the city, seeing Florence without head or government, took courage and began to rob shops and counting-houses, the dwellings of

¹ [Charles of Valois was nicknamed *Senzaterra*, Lackland.]

the Bianchi and of those who could not defend themselves. For five long days the city remained without governors ; anarchy reigned ; pillage, murder, arson, and outrages of all kinds took place. Corso Donati, who seems to have been more like a fiend incarnate than a human being, acted as leader, and instigated his followers to new horrors. For eight days more bands went through the country, robbing and burning houses. During all this time, Charles of Valois lifted no finger to save the city, gave no heed to the oaths he had taken as the son of a king, but pillaged and extorted money on his own account.

Finally there was a lull, and Charles and his council elected new priors to complete the unexpired term of those who had been deposed from office, — this time all from the Neri and from the worst of the *popolani*. A few days later these priors chose as podestà Cante Gabrielle da Gubbio, an ardent Guelph, who had come to Florence with Charles of Valois.

In the same month (November, 1301) Boniface again sent Cardinal d' Acquasparta to pacify the warring elements in the city. Whatever may have been the Pope's object, it is evident that the cardinal, though clumsy and not equal to the emergency, was perfectly honest in his attempts. He arranged several marriages among the rival families, the usual way of bringing concord out of discord ; but

when he wished to divide the offices among the two factions, the Neri, with Charles at their back, absolutely declined to accept his authority, and he again departed, leaving the city under an interdict. All semblance of a peace was again dissipated on Christmas Day. For as Niccolò de' Cerchi and some companions were passing, on their way to the country, through the Piazza di Santa Croce, where a sermon was being preached, they were perceived by Simone, the son of Corso Donati and nephew of Niccolò, and followed to the bridge over the Affrico. There Simone assaulted and killed his uncle. In the *mêlée*, however, he was himself wounded, and died the same or the following night, which, says Villani, was considered a great misfortune, as he was the most accomplished youth in Florence, and the only hope of his father.

Cante Gabrielle had proved a willing tool in the hands of the Neri, and the first few months of 1302 were filled with accusations, condemnations, and confiscations, though at first no one was banished. But still the Neri were not satisfied: they entered into an agreement with Pierre Ferrant of Languedoc, one of Charles's barons, to make a conspiracy with the Cerchi, Baldinaccio degli Adimari, Baschiera de' Tosinghi, Naldo Gherardini, and others of the Bianchi, and to promise for a large sum of money to reinstate them in power and betray Valois into their hands. Letters consequently were drawn

up, or forged, to which the seal of the Bianchi was affixed. These were carried to Charles by Ferrant, as had been agreed.¹ Forthwith all the Cerchi Bianchi of Porta San Piero and the others were cited to appear, but either because of their fear at having been discovered or because they were afraid of losing their lives by the perfidy of the Neri, they fled from the city, — some to Arezzo, some to Pistoia, and some to Pisa. In consequence of this they were on the 4th of April condemned as rebels, and banished; their palaces were razed, and their goods in town and country confiscated. Charles of Valois then started immediately on his expedition to Sicily. He had come ostensibly to bring peace; instead he brought discords, bloodshed, all the horrors of intestine warfare, and misery to hundreds, and caused many to wander about the world as exiles from their native land.² More than six hundred, Dino Compagni says, were included in this decree of banishment; among them was Dante, who had been the subject of two previous decrees this year. The first decree bears the date of January 27. In it Dante is accused of barratry, extortion, corruption, and of agitating against the Pope, Charles of Valois, the peace of the city and of the Guelphs, and is condemned to the payment of the large sum of five thousand

¹ For a different account see Dino Compagni, ii. 25.

² Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 49; Dino Compagni, ii. 28.

small florins, and in default thereof, within three days, to the loss of all his goods, and in any case to an exile without the confines of Tuscany for the space of two years, and exclusion from all office or honor. Since Dante had neither responded to the citation nor paid the fine, and thereby confessed his guilt, a second decree was issued on March 10. It condemned him to be burned alive (*igni comburatur sic quod moriatur*) if he ever came into the power of the commune.¹

Where Dante was, what his thoughts were, or what part he may have taken in the affairs of Florence during these terrible months can now never be known. In regard to his wanderings after the decree of banishment almost an equal uncertainty exists. Here and there a line in the *Divina Commedia*, or a tradition, often unreliable, which still clings to a town, that the poet once visited it, or occasionally some more positive indication, gives a glimpse of him; and again for years at a time a darkness that nothing can dissipate hangs over him and his wanderings.

In June, 1302,² the Cerchi, Guidalotti, Ricasoli,

¹ For the text of the two decrees see Fraticelli, *Vita di Dante*, notes and illustrations to chap. 5, pp. 147 ff.

² There is some uncertainty in regard to this date, from the fact that the parchment is partially destroyed and the year cannot now be read. Various dates have been assigned by different biographers: 1302, 1303, 1304, 1306, 1307; but 1302 seems the most probable. See Bartoli, *Storia della lett. it.* vol. v. chap. 9. [See also Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni*, ii. 569 ff.]

Pazzi, Scolari, Ubertini, Uberti, and others met in the choir of the abbey church of San Godenzo in Mugello,¹ and promised to indemnify the Ubaldini for any damage that might be done to their possessions, especially to the castle of Montaccenico, in the approaching contest (*occasione novitatis seu guerre facte vel faciende per castrum Montis Accianichi*).² Dante was present at this agreement, and his name is among those of the bondsmen in the document, which has come down to us.

The majority of the exiles, however, had congregated at Arezzo, where they were at first cordially received by Uguccone della Faggiuola, who was at that time podestà for the sixth time. But just as in Florence there had been a division of the Guelphs, so now in Arezzo the Ghibellines divided into pure Ghibellines, or Secchi, and those who had a leaning toward the Guelphs, or Verdi. Uguccone, who had been promised a cardinal's hat for his son by Boniface, and was thinking of allying himself by marriage to Corso Donati,³ was

¹ [A valley of Tuscany, to the north of Florence, towards the Apennines of Romagna: really the highest part of the Val di Sieve.]

² [A castle of the Ubaldini in Mugello, about twenty miles from Florence. The approaching contest was the first campaign in Mugello, an unsuccessful attempt from that vantage ground to injure and control Florentine territory. See Dino Compagni, ii. 29.]

³ Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*, vol. i. sub *Signori della Fag-*

the natural leader of the Verdi. In consequence he was strongly suspected by the Bianchi, who, although they had been ardent Guelphs but a short time before, were now siding with the Ghibellines. Indeed, we find them shortly after at Forlì with Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi, who formed a league which comprised Forlì, Imola, Faenza, Bologna, Arezzo, with Uguccione (against his will), Federico di Montefeltro, and Bernardino da Polenta, while Pisa, Pistoia, and the Ubaldini held themselves in arms and ready to join him. In March, 1303, Scarpetta moved against Florence at the head of eight hundred horse and six hundred foot, among whom were the Bianchi and Ghibelline exiles, who thenceforth made one party. But this army wasted itself on the Castello di Puliciano, near the Borgo San Lorenzo, which was taken without any resistance. When news of this reached Florence, immediately the whole force of the city, with a band of Lucchese allies led by Folcieri da Calvoli, podestà and a personal enemy of Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi, went out to meet them, and so terrified them that the Bolognese, who claimed to have been deceived by the

giuola nel Montefeltro, says that Uguccione della Faggiuola's daughter, whose name is unknown, married Corso Donati's son; but if Villani is correct in saying that the latter had only one son, this cannot be true, since he was wounded on Christmas Day, 1301, and died that day or the next.

Bianchi, took to flight, and their fear communicating itself to others, the whole force was routed without striking a blow. Many threw away their arms and were killed as they fled, and many were taken prisoners, to be led back to Florence and barbarously treated by Folcieri. Among the latter was the judge Donato Alberti, who was ridden with a noose around his neck on an ass, and after having been derided by the citizens, was beheaded in virtue of a law which he himself had made while prior.¹

In the early spring of 1304 (although exactly when is not known) the exiles had chosen Alessandro da Romena as their captain,² and a council of twelve, among whom, says Leonardo Bruni, was Dante. Many things had taken place during the year to make them hope that their return to their city was not far distant, and the affair of Mugello had not cast them down utterly.³ In Florence the Neri had not been at peace. Corso Donati was dissatisfied because he had not so much power as he thought himself worthy of or entitled to, and some of the nobles had taken sides with him against the people. He had demanded that the accounts of the city should be examined; the priors, with the people at their back, had resisted. Immediately Florence was in an uproar. Tower

¹ Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 60. ² [See Appendix.] ³ [See above, p. 28.]

and fortress were armed in the ancient manner; again robbery, murder, and arson were let loose upon the city, which was only saved from absolute destruction by the Lucchese, who came at the request of the commune, quieted the tumult, and after disarming both parties, went away. In addition to this, in October of the preceding year, Boniface VIII. had ended a life of pride and ambition, and the calm and wise Benedict XI. had ascended the papal throne, — “a good man, honest and just, of pure and religious life, who had every wish to do good,” according to Villani; “a man who was neither a Guelph nor a Ghibelline, but a universal father, who did not sow but removed discord,” according to another authority. In the spring of 1304, wishing to see Florence not only at peace with herself, but desiring to reconcile her with all Tuscany, and to bring back the exiles, he sent as his legate Niccolò da Prato, the Cardinal of Ostia. The cardinal, a great diplomat, clever, wise, and far-seeing, who although of Ghibelline extraction was opposed to the furor of parties, arrived in Florence March 10, and was received by the Florentines with olive branches and every sign of joy, as by people who had become divided and discordant while having every wish to live in peace. After he had been in Florence a few days, he set forth the prerogatives of his embassy and the commands that he had received from the Pope,

in a sermon which he preached in Piazza di San Giovanni, and found forthwith that the large mass of the people were in his favor, that they were weary of the constant changes, discords, bloodshed, and riots that the nobles were constantly bringing about to oppress them, and that they desired peace. They immediately gave him full authority to reconcile the citizens within the city and the exiles, to choose priors, *gonfalonieri*, and *signorie* according to his wishes. Armed with this authority he revived the system of *gonfalonieri delle compagnie*,¹ and calling them gave them the gonfalons. But although the people were much encouraged by the reforms of the cardinal, the nobles never ceased to oppose him and to put difficulties in his way. But for all that he was in no way discouraged, and either at the end of March or at the beginning of April [1304] sent a certain Frate L. with a letter to the Bianchi, promising that if they would desist from all attacks, he would effect their return, reinstate them in their old privileges, and reform Florence according to their wishes. To this they answered,² promising as his sons to submit themselves entirely to his guidance, and never to deviate from the limitations of his precepts. He then caused twelve delegates of the

¹ [Companies of citizen militia, distinguished by their standards, instituted in the time of the *popolo vecchio*, in 1250.]

² [In the foregoing letter.]

Bianchi to come to Florence, lodged them in the Borgo San Niccolò, and brought about frequent consultations between them and the captains of the Guelphs and Neri, to consider the surest way to establish a peace, and as usual to arrange marriages which should bind together both parties. But in these conferences it seemed to the Guelphs and Neri that the cardinal was too ardent a partisan of the Ghibellines and Bianchi ; and in order to bring his mission to nought they ordered letters to be forged and sent with the cardinal's seal to his Bianchi and Ghibelline friends in Bologna and Romagna, begging them to come to his aid without delay with horse and foot. They came as far as Trespiano and Mugello. Forthwith Florence was thrown into confusion, and there was great fear, as many insisted that the letters had been written by the cardinal. The twelve delegates of the Bianchi and Ghibellines immediately returned to Arezzo, and the army, by order of the cardinal, returned whence it had come. Florence was somewhat quieted, but that all suspicion might be removed, the Signoria begged the cardinal to go to Prato and Pistoia to reconcile the citizens of those places, and because he could not do otherwise he departed. But the captains of the Guelphs and the Neri, seeing that he favored the Bianchi and Ghibellines, ordered the Guazzalotti, a powerful Guelph family of Prato, to cause a riot against him, and he was

obliged to flee in fear of losing his life. He laid the city under an interdict, returned to Florence, and by promising absolution for those who should join him, endeavored to raise an army to go against the inhabitants of Prato. Many who were more Ghibelline than Guelph in feeling flocked to his standards. Again the city was thrown into an uproar, and the Guelphs and Neri likewise armed themselves; and many who had sided with him turned against him. The cardinal then saw that he could not accomplish his object against Prato, and that Florence was on the eve of a revolution. He therefore departed (June 4), saying: "Since you will have war and anathemas, and will neither hear nor obey the messenger of Christ's Vicar, nor have peace or repose amongst yourselves, remain as you list, with the malediction of Heaven and the Holy Church upon your heads." Thus, excommunicating the citizens and laying the city under an interdict, he returned to Benedict XI., who approved of all that he had done.¹

¹Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 69.

LETTER II.

THIS letter wrote Dante Alighieri to the Counts Oberto and Guido da Romena after the death of their uncle, Count Alexander da Romena, condoling with them for his decease.

1. THE illustrious Count Alexander, your uncle, whose soul, in the days just passed, has returned to the heavenly land whence it had come, was my lord, and his memory will dominate me even so long as I live; for his greatness of soul alone, which is now abundantly rewarded above the stars with a worthy guerdon, made me his vassal for many years. Indeed, this virtue, united in him with all others, rendered his name illustrious beyond the fame of the Italian heroes. With what were his heroic banners emblazoned if not with "We show the scourge that putteth vice to flight"? For he bore outwardly scourges argent on a field gules, and within, a mind through love of virtue repelling vice. Let it grieve, therefore, let the noblest race in Tuscany grieve, that shone with so great a man; and let all his friends and vassals grieve, whose hope death has cruelly struck down.

Among these last, ah me! must I grieve, who, driven from my country and undeservedly an exile,

brooding over my misfortunes, consoled myself continually with the precious hope I placed in him.

2. But, although the bitterness of woe weighs upon us, for the loss of the bodily parts, if we consider the intellectual parts that remain, surely the light of a sweet consolation will arise before the eye of the mind. For he who honored the Virtues on earth, is now honored by the Virtues in heaven ; and he who was a Paladin of the Roman Court in Tuscany, now chosen a Courtier of the Eternal Kingdom, exults among the Princes of the Blessed in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Wherefore, my dearest Lords, I would entreat you with humble prayers to grieve with moderation, and to turn your backs upon thoughts of the body, except in so far as they can serve you as examples ; and as that most just man has appointed you heirs of his estate, so may you, as you are his nearest relatives, clothe yourselves in his surpassing character.

3. But in addition to these things, I, as your vassal, would sue your discretion for pardon, for not taking part in the sad rites : neither neglect nor ingratitude withheld me, but the unforeseen poverty that exile has put upon me. For she, like a savage persecutor, has thrust me down into the abyss of her bondage without horses or arms ; and although I struggle with all my might to rise, she, accursed, thus far prevailing, contrives to restrain me.¹

¹ Cf. the letter to Can Grande, where Dante again speaks of

COMMENT ON LETTER II.

THE COUNTS GUIDI.

The County Guido, and whoe'er the name
Of the great Bellincione since hath taken.

Paradiso, xvi. 98, 99.

NOTHING can be more profitable to the student of the Middle Ages than the study of the lives of the individual members of some of the great Italian families. In them he will find revealed the spirit which animated the whole age, and he cannot fail to be impressed by their vivid personality, — a personality which, even when but little is known of the man, nevertheless stamps him upon the mind as intensely alive, with a life in which the passions knew no check. Anger, love, hatred, each in turn swayed him with a power which is only possible when man is emerging from barbarism, when self is paramount, and his duty to his fellows but dimly perceived, or not at all, and when even the superstition or religious fear that caused him so often to endow convents or build churches could not restrain him. Even the legends and traditions with which the early history of these families is often overlaid are valuable, for they too show in

the poverty that exile has put upon him: "For poverty presseth so hard upon me that I must needs abandon these and other things useful for the public good."

no small degree the temper which animated the times.

During the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, the Guidi were certainly one of the richest and most powerful families of Italy. They gradually extended their influence in every direction from their original possessions in the higher valleys of the Apennines, purchasing or conquering one castle after another, until, as Villani says, they were lords of nearly the whole of Romagna. In the Casentino, which is entirely watered by the Arno, they established their principal seats, in the castles of Poppi, Romena, and Porciano; several other members of the family settled on the other side of the mountains, in the strongholds of Bagno and Montegraneli, to which vast territories, watered by the Savio, were tributary. They also possessed strong castles in the country of Dovadola and Modigliana, through which flows the stream which takes its rise near San Godenzo, and from its slow and placid course is called at first Acquacheta, but in the valley of the Badia di San Benedetto in Alpe, to-day almost destroyed, changes its name to Montone. They possessed this ample domain with the fullest authority, as the diplomas given to them by emperors from Barbarossa to Charles IV., which speak of valuable services rendered by them, fully testify. Their castles and strongholds were innumerable, grand and solid in construction, as the

frequent ruins still to be found in the Casentino, the Val di Sieve, and Romagna testify. The monasteries and many churches that they endowed also confirm the reputation of the family for extraordinary power and riches.

In the thirteenth century we find the Guidi occupying important positions, — such as podestà, captain of the people, imperial or papal vicar, — and sometimes as church dignitaries, not only in the Romagnolese towns of Faenza, Cesena, and Forlì, but also in the Tuscan towns of Pistoia, Arezzo, Pisa, and even Florence.

At the first glance it seems marvelous that such power and influence could decay, but the fact is easily explained when we learn that on account of their Lombard origin, the Guidi divided their property equally among their male children, and observed no law of primogeniture; and also that they were surrounded by growing communes, who were always searching for opportunities to increase their own territories at the expense of the bordering barons; and that Florence, Siena, Arezzo, Bologna, Faenza, Forlì, Ravenna, and many other places, made themselves strong by despoiling this and that count of his estates, now by force of arms, now by treaty. Florence even went so far as to make a law by which her citizens were prohibited from intermarrying with the Guidi on pain of a fine of four thousand lire, and which further de-

clared that all the children of such a union would be considered illegitimate, and thus incapable of succeeding to the property of their parents.

Like almost all the Italian nobles of that time, who were principally of Lombard or German origin, the Guidi were for a long time loyal adherents of the empire; not because of any attachment to the empire as an institution, — an idea which their own ambitious schemes entirely precluded, — but because their frequent quarrels among themselves very often necessitated their calling on the emperor for protection, who invariably took the part of the weak against the strong. As early as the latter part of the eleventh century, however, we find them closely allied with the great Contessa Matilde of Tuscany, and hence siding with Gregory VII. against Henry IV.; and in the thirteenth century we find them, especially the Romena branch of the family, constantly shifting from side to side, now Guelph, now Ghibelline.

The darkness that hangs over so many of the men as well as the deeds of the Middle Ages, that surrounds so many of the acts of Dante's life, has cast a more than usually impenetrable veil over the early history of the Counts Guidi. Difficulties assail the student on every side; and the numerous writers who have devoted their attention to the subject, instead of making matters clearer, seem often only to have added to the confusion. With

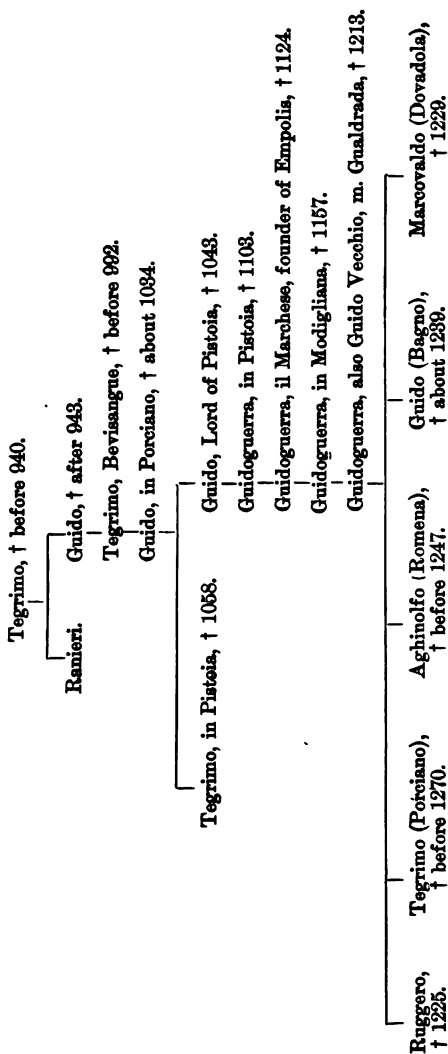
the exception of a few legends, which, although believed for many years, can no longer be credited, little is known of the early members of the family, save what can be found in parchments relating to the churches or monasteries which they endowed, either in expiation of their own crimes, or for the salvation of the soul of some relative. Their later history and genealogy are inextricably entangled by the fact that so many of the members of the family bore the same name at the same time. We find Tegrimos and Guidos in great numbers, and later on the confusion existing between the Agnolfos and the Alessandros is such as to render it doubtful to which generation they severally belong, although it is especially important for the vindication of Dante's character that all such doubts should be removed.

Villani says in his chronicle¹ that the founder of the family, whom he calls Guido, came to Italy with the Emperor Otto at the end of the tenth century, and was made Count Palatine of Tuscany, and rewarded with Modigliana in Romagna; but nevertheless the most remote notices of the family start with Tegrimo, Count Palatine of Tuscany, about whom little is known except that he was a Lombard.² He is mentioned in documents as early as 927, and owed the countship of Modigliana

¹ *Cronica*, iv. 1, and v. 37.

² See Plate I., p. 42.

PLATE I.

(See Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*.)

to his wife Engelrada, of the house of the Onesti in Ravenna. The story goes that as he was following a deer in the chase, he approached the castle of Modigliana, and that when he had killed the animal, he presented it as a gift to the lady of the castle, Engelrada, daughter of Martino, Duke of Ravenna. The courteous act pleased the lady, and she offered her hand to the count, together with the great riches which belonged to her; and thus extended Tegrino's own domains.¹ Villani goes on to relate that the Guidi became lords of almost the whole of Romagna, with their capital at Ravenna; but that on account of their tyranny, the people rose up and slew them, only one being saved, a child, called Guido, who was in Modigliana with his nurse, and who afterwards took the name of Bevisangue. But there can be no doubt that the child's real name was Tegrino, and that he was named after his grandfather, the founder of the family. The name of Bevisangue was given to him because when he revenged himself upon the slayers of his parents, his savage hatred caused him to lick their blood from his sword. Various Tegrimos and Guidos follow, and soon we find *Guerra* added as a surname to the latter and thenceforward an integral part of the name. Strangely enough, the principal notices that have come down to us of the first Guidoguerra relate to the endowment of

¹ Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*, vol. ix.

various monasteries and churches, although the name was probably given to him on account of his warlike spirit. The oldest of these documents has reference to the foundation of the Hermitage of S. Barnaba di Gamugno, which he and his wife, Ermellina, constructed and endowed about 1053, making a gift of it to St. Peter Damian for his monks of Fonte Avellana. On account of this gift a quarrel seems to have arisen between St. Damian and the count, in which the former was accused of venality and avarice, but was exonerated by Gregory VII. On account of the darkness of the times in which Guidoguerra lived but little is known of his political life. It is certain, however, that he held the absolute government of Pistoia in his hands; and there are many documents between 1060 and 1103 which inform us of his presence with the Marchesa Beatrice and afterwards with the Contessa Matilde in the procedures which were held in Tuscany and in other places of Italy subject to their jurisdiction. His son, Guidoguerra II., is also mentioned as assisting the Contessa Matilde in her law procedures, and is called the Marchese, because he was adopted by her and would have been her heir, if motives, of which we must remain in ignorance, had not induced her to leave her estates to the Pope.

The third Guidoguerra and his sister Sofia, children of the last named, seem to have been not the

least remarkable members of this remarkable family. Guido accompanied Conrad to the crusades, and when the latter died in 1152, attended the diet at Frankfort at which Frederick of Suabia, called Barbarossa, was elected emperor, and was forthwith chosen his ambassador to treat with Eugenius III. He was also at the famous diet which Frederick held at Roncaglia on his way to be crowned at Rome, to which consuls and representatives of almost all the cities of Italy came to swear fidelity to the emperor, and he seems to have followed Frederick's fortunes until his coronation in 1155. After this year his name is not again encountered. His sister Sofia, who was the Abbess of Pratovecchio, a position which several other members of the family afterward held, was a woman of great spirit. She governed the estates of her brother, Guidoguerra, during his continual absence, and very frequently, escorted by the count's followers, rode to this or that castle to administer justice to the vassals; she likewise performed the same office for the dependents of the monasteries of Rosano, Pratovecchio, and San Benedetto di Arezzo, over all of which she had jurisdiction. When her brother died she became guardian of his son, Guidoguerra IV., who was very young at the time.

Guidoguerra IV., like his father, followed Barbarossa, and in the first months of 1166 received

the emperor at his castle of Modigliana, where the empress gave birth to a son. During his lifetime we see the growth of the communes, for in 1181, after a three years' war with Faenza, he was compelled to sue for peace, and obtained it by paying a yearly tribute of a byzantine of gold for all his possessions in Romagna. In order to defend himself against the power of the communes, he obtained a new diploma, dated May 25th, 1191; from Henry VI., in which the emperor, beside enumerating more than two hundred castles possessed by Guidoguerra and placed under the imperial protection, declared that he gave it in answer to the prayers of his beloved and dearest prince, for the magnificent and honorable services that Guidoguerra's ancestors had rendered to his predecessors, that Guidoguerra's father had rendered to Lothario, Conrad, and Frederick, and, in fine, for the not less important services rendered by Guidoguerra himself. Because Guidoguerra did not receive from the emperor the protection for which he had hoped, or for some other unknown reason, after this time we find him falling away from the imperial party and allying himself with the Guelphs, and more especially with the Florentines. But when Otto IV. came to Italy to receive the imperial crown, Guidoguerra's Ghibelline spirit was reawakened, for it seems that he went to meet the emperor on the borders of Germany. It

must have been this fact which caused Villani and the other chroniclers to state that he came from Germany with the emperor and was the founder of the family.¹

One of the most graceful stories of this time is told about Guidoguerra and his wife Gualdrada, first briefly by Villani, and afterwards by Boccaccio in his usual graphic manner, as follows: "The emperor Otto IV., being by chance in Florence and having gone to the festival of St. John, to make it more gay with his presence, it happened that to the church with the other city dames, as our custom is, came the wife of Messer Berto and brought with her a daughter of hers called Gualdrada, who was still unmarried. And as they sat there with the others, the maiden being beautiful in face and figure, nearly all present turned round to look at her, and among the rest the emperor. And having much commended her beauty and manners, he asked Messer Berto, who was near him, who she was. To which Messer Berto smiling answered: 'She is the daughter of one who, I dare say, would let you kiss her if you wished.' These words the young lady heard, being near the speaker; and somewhat troubled by the opinion her father seemed to have of her, that, if he wished it, she would suffer herself to be kissed by any one in this free way, rising, and looking a moment at her

¹ Litta, *op. cit.*, vol. ix.

father, and blushing with shame, said : ' Father, do not make such courteous promises at the expense of my modesty, for certainly, unless by violence, no one shall ever kiss me, except him whom you shall give me as my husband.' The Emperor on hearing this, much commended the words and the young lady. . . . And calling forward a noble youth called Guido Beisangue, called Guido the Elder, who as yet had no wife, he insisted upon his marrying her, and gave him as her dowry a large territory in the Casentino and the Alps, and made him Count thereof." ¹

It is unfortunate that this story, which contrasts so pleasantly with the scenes of turbulence and bloodshed with which the time was full, and which shows the " good Gualdrada " in such an attractive light, as a sweet, modest girl, should have to be consigned to the fabulous; but documents have come down in which Gualdrada, as the wife of Guidoguerra, gave to the church of Santa Maria at Pietrafitta all that her husband possessed at Pratiglione and at Faeta, ten years before Otto had been chosen emperor. She was not even Guidoguerra's first wife, for although several historians, and among them Ammirato, do not credit it, there can be little doubt that he was first married to Agnese, daughter of Guglielmo il Vecchio, Marchese di Monferrato. It is equally certain, how-

¹ Quoted by Longfellow, note to *Inferno*, xvi.

ever, that he afterwards married Gualdrada, the daughter of Belincione Berto of the house of the Ravignani, whom Cacciaguida saw

"go begirt

With leather and with bone, and from the mirror

His dame depart without a painted face,"¹

and of whom Villani speaks as the "best and most honored gentleman of Florence." She it was who was the mother of his children, and through whom the Guidi inherited their houses in the Porta San Piero, which afterward came into the possession of the Cerchi.

The chronicler Tolesano, who knew Guido-guerra or Guido Vecchio, — as he is called by Villani and others, — wrote of him, that he differed from his father both in life and habits, and that, like Rehoboam, he still followed in old age the ways of his youth. In confirmation of this, a letter of Innocent III., written to him from Segni, September 20, 1212, exhorts him to repent of the numerous sins committed in his youth, which in old age he heaped up with many others instead of renouncing them, — as, for example, insulting in every way those monks whom he ought to cherish, because they prayed God for his conversion.

Guidoguerra IV. and Gualdrada had, beside two daughters, five sons, one of whom, Ruggero, died in Sicily in 1225. Ruggero's four brothers became

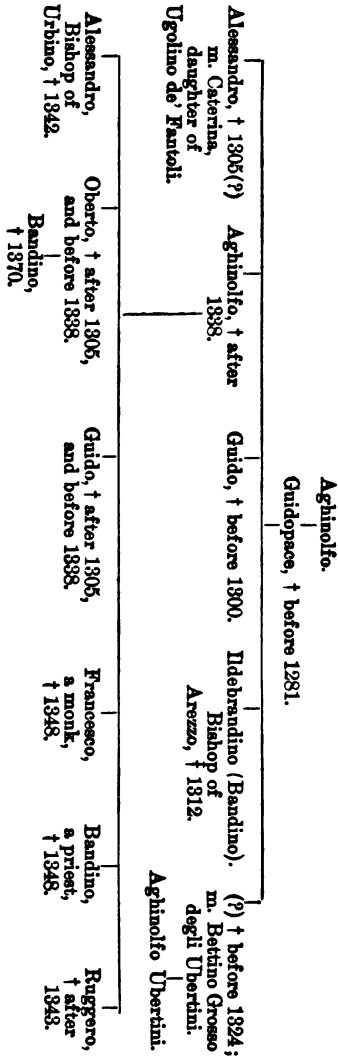
¹ *Paradiso*, xv. 112-115.

his heirs, and it is from them that the four different branches of the Guido family, which are named after their principal estates, take their rise. From Tegrino come the counts of Modigliana and Porciano; from Guido, the counts of Bagno; from Marcovaldo, those of Dovadola; and from Aghinolfo, the counts of Romena. We shall here concern ourselves only with the counts of Romena, in regard to whose genealogy many difficulties exist.¹

Aghinolfo, the founder of this branch of the family, seems to have been the first to occupy the position of podestà, which he held twice in Arezzo, in 1211 and 1237. He was with the emperor Frederick II. in Rome on the day of his coronation, and in 1239 was rewarded by him with the countship of Romagna. Nothing is known of him after he was taken a prisoner by the Bolognese, who had come to the aid of the Guelphic town, Faenza, while besieged. His son Guido, or according to best authorities Guidopace, was also a faithful adherent of the Ghibellines, and, like other members of his family, was rewarded by the emperor for his own and his father's services. He, like his father, was podestà of Arezzo, being elected in 1261. He held this dignity two years, and it is probably from his success in pacifying both the Guelphs and the Ghibellines in the town, while in all the other parts of Tuscany his party prepon-

¹ [See Plate II. p. 51.]

PLATE II.
The ROMENA BRANCH, according to Passerini. (See Lista.)



derated and abused its power, that he received the name of Pace.

With him begin the difficulties in the genealogy.¹ Troya² insists that not he but his son, to whom he gives two brothers, Alessandro and Aghinolfo, was called Guido Pace, and that he in turn had three sons, Alessandro, Aghinolfo, and Ildebrandino. Of these only Aghinolfo had any children; and according to Troya, it is to two of them, Guido and Oberto, that Dante wrote the letter of condolence on the death of their uncle, Alessandro. But after much inquiry and many controversies there seems to be little or no doubt that Troya has introduced one more generation than actually existed, by dividing one family and supposing there were two Alessandros and two Aghinolfos, when in reality there was only one of each.

Passerini,³ Witte, and others give Guido, the son of Aghinolfo, whom they designate by the name of Pace, three or four daughters and four sons, Alessandro, Aghinolfo, Guido, and Ildebrandino. Of these only Aghinolfo had any issue, and among his children were the Oberto and Guido to whom the letter of condolence is written.

The only reasons that Troya seems to have for

¹ [See Plate III. p. 53.]

² *Del veltro allegorico de' Ghibellini*, plate facing p. 355.

³ Litta, *op. cit.* [vol. ix. fasc. lxxv. dispensa 149, plate XII.]; Witte, *Dante-Forschungen*, vol. ii. p. 194, *Dante und die Grafen Guidi*. [See Plate II. p. 51.]

COMMENT ON LETTER II.

PLATE III.

The ROMENA BRANCH, according to Troya.

(See *Del veliro allegorico de Ghivellini*, Naples, 1856, p. 351 ff.)

1225. Aghinolfo.

1275. Guido I.

1281, Guido II, counterfeits the florin, according to Dante. Living in 1300.

1281, Alessandro I., another counterfeiter. Living in 1316. Husband of Catalina da Pantolini.

1281, Aghinolfo, third counterfeiter. Died early in 1300. Bastard.

1338, Nov. 15, Aghinolfo II. makes a will and speaks of his sons, Guido and Oberto, already dead.

1305 (?) Alessandro II., friend of Dante, mourned for by him, and called *Patruus Oberti et Guidonis*?

1338, Guido and Oberto, of whom the will of their father speaks as already dead.

1311, Ragier, put to the ban by the Emperor Henry VII.

asserting that there were two Aghinolfos, uncle and nephew, are to be found in a document of March 13, 1300, in which an unworthy son of the first Aghinolfo, whom Troya supposes to have been dead at that time, asks permission to sell certain property; and in a will, ascribed by Troya to the nephew (Aghinolfo II.), which is dated the 15th of November, 1338, in which his sons, Oberto and Guido, are spoken of as already dead. According to Borghini the request in the first document was made while Aghinolfo was still living, and hence there can be little doubt that the will of 1338 also belongs to him and not to a nephew. This would explain the use of the words "corpore languens" with which he refers to himself, as he must have been an old man.

In regard to the two Alessandros, also uncle and nephew, Troya seems to have better grounds for his assertion. He states that a document among the Azzurrinian Archives, dated the 6th of September, 1316, particularly designates Catalina, the daughter of Ugolino de' Fantolini, as wife of Alessandro da Romena (*uxor illustris viri D. Comitæ Alexandri de Romena Tusciæ Dei gratia Palatini*), while the nephew (Alessandro II.), the patron mourned for in Dante's letter, died in 1304 or 1305. But, as has been shown by Passerini and Wüstenfeld, the date of this document is not at all certain, and rests merely upon the assertion of

Mittarelli. Passerini establishes the fact that Tonduzzi, who lived a century before Mittarelli, asserts positively that already in his time the year and the day of that document could not be deciphered on account of the partial destruction of the parchment. Moreover, Taddeo di Montefeltro, the husband of the sister of Catalina, is mentioned in the document as still living, but Wüstenfeld puts his death in 1299.¹ Added to this, the document makes mention of the yet undivided real estate left to the two sisters by their father, Ugolino Fantolini, while it is known that one of them sold her share to Maghinardo Pagano da Susinana and the Conti da Conio in 1291. If the testimony gathered by these scholars were not sufficient to disprove Troya's assertion, Todeschini has unearthed a document which takes away his last proof. In the "*Memorie abbreviate de' Conti Guidi*" of P. Ildefonso, there is a document (1355) of the Emperor Charles IV., by which castles, various properties, and lands were bestowed upon Count Bandino da Romena; and in it the whole succession of the count's ancestors from the original head of the Romena branch is set forth. In this succession Troya's extra generation finds no place, and from further proof that Todeschini adduces there can be no doubt that Witte's and Passerini's genealogical table is the correct one.

¹ Passerini says 1282.

All this trouble in the genealogical order of the family of the counts of Romena would be of comparatively little importance to the student of Dante except for two things, — this letter of condolence and a passage in the thirtieth canto of the *Inferno*, which it seems impossible to reconcile with each other without convicting Dante of base ingratitude.

On the burning of the house of the Anchioni in the Borgo San Lorenzo in 1281 there was found a considerable sum of Florentine gold florins, which instead of being made of twenty-four carats gold, according to the law, were of a mixture of seven-eighth parts gold, and one eighth part base metal.¹ It was discovered that one Maestro Adamo of Brescia had made them in Romena at the instigation of the Counts Guidi, and in consequence he was burned alive on the road between Florence and Romena. To this day "the dead man's heap of stones," *la macia del uomo morto*, marks the spot on which Maestro Adamo suffered. This man Dante finds in the Tenth Bolgia of the Eighth Circle of the *Inferno*, bloated with dropsy, and is thus addressed by him : —

... "behold, and be attentive
 Unto the misery of Master Adam;
 I had while living much of what I wished,
 And now, alas! a drop of water crave.
 The rivulets, that from the verdant hills

¹ Troya, *Veltro allegorico di Dante*, p. 25.

Of Cassentin descend down into Arno,
 Making their channels to be cold and moist,
 Ever before me stand, and not in vain;
 For far more doth their image dry me up
 Than the disease which strips my face of flesh.
 The rigid justice that chastises me
 Draweth occasion from the place in which
 I sinned, to put the more my sighs in flight.
 There is Romena, where I counterfeited
 The currency imprinted with the Baptist,
 For which I left my body burned above.
 But if I here could see the tristful soul
 Of Guido, or Alessandro, or their brother,
 For Branda's fount I would not give the sight.
 One is within already, if the raving
 Shades that are going round about speak truth;
 But what avails it me, whose limbs are tied?
 If I were only still so light, that in
 A hundred years I could advance one inch,
 I had already started on the way,
 Seeking him out among this squalid folk,
 Although the circuit be eleven miles,
 And be not less than half a mile across.
 For them am I in such a family;
 They did induce me into coining florins,
 Which had three carats of impurity."¹

The question which has agitated the minds of
 the commentators, and to which there is no satis-
 factory answer, is in regard to the Alessandro in
 the last Bolgia of the Eighth Circle, whom Maes-
 tro Adamo so eagerly longs to behold. Can it be
 possible that he is the same man who is the subject
 of this letter of condolence, and whom Dante says

¹ *Inferno*, xxx. 60-80.

had a "mind in love with virtue and at enmity with vice?" Can it be possible that Dante should entreat his nephews Guido and Oberto "to clothe themselves in the surpassing character" of one whom he afterwards stigmatizes as a counterfeiter? If Troya's genealogical tree could be accepted, all difficulty in regard to this question would be removed, for although he agrees with all other historians in making the instigator of Maestro Adamo's crime a son of the grandson of Guidoguerra and Gualdrada, he introduces into the next generation another Alessandro, who, he asserts, was the captain of the Bianchi and the subject of the letter of condolence. Unfortunately Troya's second Alessandro probably never existed, and we are consequently forced to the conclusion that the subject of the letter and the Alessandro mentioned by Maestro Adamo are one and the same person.

The reasons that Dante had for his ardent admiration of Alessandro in one place and his passionate accusation of him in another must forever remain hidden in the darkness of the past; but that they were good, no one who knows his character can doubt, for it is impossible to believe that he, "a preacher of justice," could be guilty of any such base insincerity. But nevertheless all attempts to absolve him from such an accusation have in the end proved fruitless. Witte, feeling this, has endeavored to set forth the various palliating circum-

stances that exist, at the same time confessing that they in no way explain the matter. He says in substance that the condemnatory verse in the thirtieth canto is not given as Dante's opinion, but is put in the mouth of Maestro Adamo, and that there are not wanting examples in which the poet contrasts his own opinion with that of the spirits whom he meets; that the sudden collapse of his hopes which he beholds in the death of Alessandro explains the extravagance of the tone of the letter to his nephews. On such occasions, he adds, the writer, in expressing himself to the mourning relatives of the departed, is glad to forget the crime committed a decade before, and deems it impossible to express sufficient eulogy and gratitude; but this it seems to me could hardly have been true of Dante, and instead of palliating his act only detracts from the lofty character with which there can be no doubt he was endowed. In another place¹ Witte says, concerning the letter of condolence, that it is absolutely impossible that the poet could have spoken to the Counts Guidi in regard to their uncle Alessandro in such a manner, and at almost the same time have placed the three brothers among the counterfeiterers in the Inferno. With this as his principal reason, he concludes that the Inferno was not published until 1314; for, he goes on to say, if we call to

¹ *Neu aufgefundene Briefe, in Dante-Forschungen*, i. 473 ff.

mind how poorly the Counts Guidi justified the hopes that Dante had placed in them, and with how much duplicity, — yes, even to the point of hostility, — they deported themselves in 1311 and 1312 against Henry VII., Dante's hero, notwithstanding their fair but hypocritical promises, then we shall understand with what reason the poet about the year 1314 laid the lash of his wrath upon those persons whom he had praised a short time before. But Witte acknowledges that there is wanting in this case a just cause of anger against the Counts of Romena, as they had never sworn fealty to the emperor, like the Porciano branch, and as a family had never favored him, notwithstanding that Aghinolfo and Ildebrandino, the only two of Alessandro's brothers then living, and with them also Ruggero, the son of the former, had stood by him to the end.

Passerini¹ accepts Dante's duplicity; and his explanation of the motives which impelled the poet to act as he did is most derogatory to the latter's character. He says that this is not the only case in which Dante contradicts himself, for even he was a man like others, animated by bile, — generous it is true, but nevertheless bile, — who easily opened his heart to hope, was angry when disappointed, and consequently disposed to write according to the strongest impressions of the moment. If we turn our attention to the time in which he wrote both

¹ [Litta, *op. cit.* vol. ix.]

the praise and the blame of Alessandro da Romena, we shall see that the letter is dated in 1305, when Count Aghinolfo, the brother of the subject of the eulogy, had been made one of the principal captains of the Bianchi, by means of whom the unhappy exile hoped to return to his country; and with the chronology of the "Divina Commedia" before us, we shall see that the thirtieth canto of the "Inferno" was composed in 1308, when Ildebrandino, Bishop of Arezzo, became a Guelph and adopted that party with all possible ardor. And thus it was disappointment, and disappointment alone, which stirred the lofty soul of the great Ghibelline.

Todeschini, on the contrary, solves the matter in the simplest way, cuts the knot with one stroke, and announces that he believes the letter of condolence to be merely the rhetorical composition of some unknown person.¹ With regard to the letter to the Cardinal of Ostia,² he asserts that the interpretation of the "A. CA." in the superscription (for in the Codex of the Vatican the *Alexander Capitaneus* is not written in full, but is thus abbreviated) is merely arbitrary. He puts no credence

¹ [See Appendix.]

² See Bartoli, *Stor. lett. it.* vol. v. chap. 8, p. 144. [It should be kept in mind that the first letter in our collection is addressed to the Cardinal of Prato in the name of A. CA. and the Council of the Whites of Florence. Witte and others interpret A. CA. as *Alexander Capitaneus*, that is, Alessandro, Count of Romena. See Appendix.]

in the statement of Leonardo Aretino, that the Bianchi chose the Count Alessandro da Romena as their leader, and adduces, to support his statements, reasons which, to say the least, are difficult to answer. He calls to mind that no chronicler and no document of that day mention Alessandro da Romena as leader of the Bianchi, although the names of the other leaders are to be found ; that there is no trace of Alessandro having been in Tuscany after the year 1300 ; and that among the list of all those who were banished from Florence with the Bianchi there is no mention of him. And finally he denies that there ever was any near relation between him and the poet. With this last Witte seems to agree, though he at the same time asserts that the testimony of Leonardo Aretino in regard to Alessandro's captaincy is incontrovertible.

As I have said above, there seems to be nothing positively known as to the identity of the third brother alluded to by Dante as guilty with Alessandro and Guido, although Witte confidently specifies Aghinolfo. He says that even if Dante thought it necessary to condemn the crime, which had been committed a generation before, it was not necessary for him to mention by name the one to whom he owed a lifelong debt of gratitude, as he himself had so emphatically affirmed ; the meaning would have remained exactly the same

and the verse would not have been injured, if it had read: *Di Guido, o d' Aghinolfo, o di lor frate*. But this very fact seems to me to cast a doubt upon Aghinolfo's guilt, and to implicate Ildebrandino, whose name would not have fitted in the line, and who, although Bishop of Arezzo, was none too good to commit that or any other villany. If Aghinolfo was guilty, it is very strange that he was not banished from Florence at the same time with his brother Guido; for he swore to maintain the peace made by Cardinal Latino between the Guelphs and Ghibellines of Florence in 1281, which his brother Guido had had no small share in establishing, and promised to pay a thousand marks of gold to the Holy See in case of failure. He died in extreme old age at his castle of Montegranelli in November, 1338, after having made a will which bears ample testimony to his great power, and in which his sons, Oberto and Guido, to whom the letter of condolence is written, are mentioned as then dead. In regard to them little seems to be known. Oberto was taken prisoner with his father, Aghinolfo, by Maghinardo Pagano at Forlì in 1292, and lived for about two years in the closest confinement in the castle of Calamello. Passerini says that he must have died shortly after his release, for he was certainly not among the living in the first years of the fourteenth century. But in this there must be some error, as Dante

could not have written the letter of condolence before 1305. Guido was given by his father to Maghinardo Pagano as a hostage, together with his brother Ruggero, when Aghinolfo obtained permission to leave his prison to treat of a peace between Maghinardo and Alessandro da Romena. He languished in the fort of Calamello until 1294 ; after that nothing seems to be known of him, and it is certain that he died before 1338.¹

¹ Litta, *op. cit.* vol. ix.

LETTER III.

DANTE writes to the Lord Moroello Marchese Malaspina.

1. THAT the fetters of the servant, who is swayed by a sense of gratitude, may not be hidden from his lord, and that the various reports, which, when circulated by others, are too frequently wont to sow the seeds of false impressions, may not proclaim that I have been made a captive through negligence, I have thought it well to lay these words before the eyes of Your Magnificence.

2. Accordingly, after my departure from the threshold of the Court, for which I have since longed, and in which, as you often marvelled to behold, it was my privilege to be enlisted in the service of liberty, barely had I set foot by the streams of Arno, with entire peace of mind, and without heed, when suddenly alas! descending like a flash of lightning,¹ there appeared to me, I know not how, a woman suited in all respects to my inclinations, my character, and my fortunes. Oh! how in wonder at her did I stand amazed. But my amazement gave place to the terror of the thunder that followed. For just as the lightnings from heaven are

¹ Cf. *Æneid*, viii. 524, 525.

followed straightway by thunder, so I had barely beheld the flash of her beauty, when a love, terrible and imperious, held sway over me. And this love, as violent as a lord who, banished from his native land, returns to it after a long exile, either slew, or drove forth, or fettered whatever had been contrary to him within me. He slew, therefore, that laudable purpose which held me aloof from women and from songs about women. The assiduous meditations wherewith I was contemplating the things of heaven and earth, as things suspect, he impiously banished. Finally, lest my soul should yet longer rebel against him, he fettered my free will, so that I must needs turn, not where I wish, but where he wishes. So Love rules within me without resistance from any power ; and how he rules me you may discover in the accompanying rhymes.

CANZONE.¹

Love, since my lamentations will have vent,
That I may force mankind to hear,
And may the death of all my powers unfold,
O make me wise to weep as I would wish ;
So that the grief which is unchained
My words may bear abroad as it is felt.
My death thou doom'st, to that I can submit ;
But who shall pity me unless I tell
All that thou makest me feel ?

¹ [See Fraticelli, *Canzoniere*, pp. 130-132. The editor has inserted the well-known translation of Charles Lyell, Esq., in place of the Italian text.]

Who will believe the toils in which I 'm caught ?
But should'st thou grant me eloquence as great
As is my torment, Lord, then ere I die
Forbid the cruel one should hear my tale ;
For if my inward sentiments she knew,
Pity might make her beauteous face less fair.
Fly from her where I will, 't is vain, she still
To my imagination comes,
Swift as the gentle thought which leads her there.
The silly soul, ingenious to its harm,
The beauteous mischief paints
In loveliness, and thus contrives its pain ;
Then gazes, and when filled with thoughts sublime,
Which still, through virtue of the eyes, attract to her,
Is angered 'gainst itself, because
The fire it kindled where it burns in grief.
What argument of reason can control
My thoughts, which as an inward whirlwind rage ?
The anguish which o'erflows the loaded mind
Breathes from the mouth in sighs intelligible,
Nor even from the eyes their just reward withholds.
The picture as an enemy remains
Victorious and severe,
And lords it o'er the freedom of the will,
And, of itself enamored, makes me seek
The substance of this shade,
Eager as like to like is wont to fly.
I know that I am snow which seeks the sun :
But to resist is vain ; like him I move
Who, in another's power,
Is carried by his feet where death is sure.
When I approach, some words I seem to hear
Which say : Haste, haste, and see this man expire.
Then I turn back to look for aid, and thus
Am ever led at pleasure of the eyes,
Which yet most wrongfully my death procure.

When wounded thus, what I become, O Love,
Thou canst relate, not I,
Thou, the spectator of my lifeless state ;
For though the soul again frequent the heart,
Oblivious ignorance attends
The state of separation, while it lasts.
When I revive, and gaze upon the wound,
Which ruin brought as sudden as the blow,
No comfort can I find,
But every limb is shaken by my fears ;
And then the sad discolored features show
What was the thunderbolt which struck me down ;
For though restored by virtue of sweet smiles,
Long time they afterward remain obscured,
Because the spirit feels no confidence return.

Thus hast thou served me, Love, amid the alps,
And in the valley of the flood,
Along whose shore thy strength I ever feel :
Living and dead thou treat'st me as thou wilt,
Thanks to the blazing light
Whose flashes are the harbinger of death.
Alas ! no ladies here, no gentle minds
I see, to whom my sorrows give concern.
If to Madonna they give none,
Never from others can I hope for aid.
My Lord, the spirit banished from thy court
No longer fears thy arrow's mightiest force :
Pride has a breast-plate given of such defence
That every dart is blunted ere it pierce ;
For heart well armed no weapon can offend.

My little mountain Song, thou go'st thy way,
And Florence, my fair city, thou may'st see,
Which 'gainst me bars her gates,
And is of pity stript, of love devoid.
If thou within her walls should'st enter, say :
Warfare against my lord henceforth is vain,

For where I left him by a chain he is bound,
 So strong, that, should your cruelty relent,
 Here to return he is no longer free.

COMMENT ON LETTER III.

THE MALASPINA.

"O," said I unto him, "through your domains
 I never passed, but where is there a dwelling
 Throughout all Europe, where they are not known?
 That fame, which doeth honor to your house,
 Proclaims its Signors and proclaims its land,
 So that he knows of them who ne'er was there.
 And, as I hope for heaven, I swear to you
 Your honored family in naught abates
 The glory of the purse and of the sword.
 It is so privileged by use and nature,
 That though a guilty head misguide the world,
 Sole it goes right, and scorns the evil way."

Purgatorio, viii. 121-132.

I.

IN no age of the world's history have the attributes of personal valor and endurance, a strong will, determination, and a masterful and imperious disposition, been so necessary to the success of a man or a family, as in the centuries immediately following the year 1000. When these qualities were lacking in an individual, he took refuge from a too turbulent world within the walls of a monastery, in whose sequestered cloisters he found the peace and oblivion for which his soul cried out; when a family

was devoid of them, it was robbed and oppressed by its neighbors, until it was despoiled of what power it had once had and sank into that forgetfulness which is accorded to all mediocrity. It can be attributed only to this fact that the Malaspina, once one of the most powerful families among the Lombard lords, left no deeper impress upon its times and country. This alone can explain why so few men of preëminence or renown should have sprung from a family which had so many male members, which was related by blood to the Marchesi of Este, of Pallavicino, and of Massa, and by marriage to many of the most powerful families of Italy, and whose estates comprised the whole of Lunigiana and extended continuously to the Apennines of the Tortonese, besides including many possessions in Sardinia.

In the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries the Malaspina took an active part in the troubled history of their country, and were great and powerful lords in almost all the northern provinces of Italy. In the fourteenth century, however, — besides Moroello the Third, the “Vapor di Val di Magra,” — the only man of great renown is Spinetta,¹ Marchese di Verrucola and Fivizzano (of the Spino Fiorito).²

¹ Spinetta, a close friend of Ugucione della Faggiuola and Can Grande della Scala, was nearly brought to his ruin by Castruccio Castracani, whom, strangely enough, Gherardino, the Bishop of Luni, Spinetta's cousin, had first brought into notice.

² [See below, p. 79.]

After this, although in the same century we find various members of the family holding the position of podestà in Siena, Pisa, Pavia, Parma, Tortona, and Milan, we meet with fewer and fewer of the Malaspina leading in public affairs; partly because they had wholly retired to their estates in Lunigiana, preferring a life of rural idleness to active participation in the troubled events of their times. Unlike other powerful families, as for instance the Guidi, grateful emperors had rarely conferred diplomas upon them for their distinguished services.¹

The same difficulties which are encountered in studying the early history of other Italian families are also to be met with in that of the Malaspina; their origin is generally concealed by the darkness of the times, and when at length they emerge into the light of history, the constant repetition of the same proper names is so confusing that very often it is absolutely impossible to ascribe any deed with positive certainty to any one bearer of

¹ In 1164, when Obizzo il Grande offered himself as a vassal to Barbarossa, the emperor placed the possessions of the Malaspina under imperial protection, and on the 29th of September conferred upon him the first investiture, by which the Malaspina became imperial vicars and were no longer independent in their domains. This investiture was afterwards confirmed by Frederick II., in one which he conferred upon Corrado l' Antico and his cousin Guglielmo in 1220, and again by Charles IV. in 1355 in one conferred upon Moroello V.

that name. The first member of the Malaspina family of whom anything seems to be known was Oberto Obizzo, whose brother founded the houses of Este, of Pallavicino, and of Massa. He held the title of Marchese, and was a great lord in almost all the provinces of northern Italy. In 986 he had several controversies with Gottofredo, Bishop of Luni, with which diocese his descendants often had quarrels, sometimes even when members of their own family occupied the bishopric. At the time when Henry I. and Arduino, Marchese d' Ivrea, fought for the rule of Italy, Oberto played an important part, taking the side of Arduino. But fortune gave the victory to the German emperor, and in 1015 Oberto Obizzo fell a prisoner into the hands of the enemy. According to some he died shortly afterwards: others say he lived till 1055. He had two sons, Oberto Obizzo, who probably is sometimes confounded with his father, and Alberto, concerning whom there is a tradition that he took part in the expedition which the Pisans and Genoese made against the Moors in Sardinia in 1017. Alberto's father and brother may possibly have taken part in this expedition. Some Malaspina certainly gained then the possessions held by them in several places in that kingdom, for it is known that the mountains of the Barbagia¹ were given to the Malaspina for having assisted in

¹ [*Purg.* xxiii. 94 - 96.]

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driving Museto, King of the Moors, from Sardinia.¹

It seems not unlikely that Alberto's only son, Oberto Obizzo,² is the same who commanded the army of the Emperor Henry IV. against the Contessa Matilde in 1084, and who was defeated at the siege of Sorbara, near Modena. He apparently died a little before 1090, and it is probable that from him sprung the Marchesi of Gavi and of Pallode in the Ligurian Apennines, who caused much talk in the Middle Ages.³

Oberto Obizzo's only son, Alberto, is the first member of the family who was called Malaspina (Evil-thorn), a name probably given to him in derision, according to a practice common enough in Italy at that time, as the names of many of the Italian families will testify.⁴ The most important

¹In 1112, when the Malaspina had become powerful lords in Sardinia, they founded a colony on the west coast of the island, on the ruins of Bosa (known in the time of the Romans), and greatly extended their dominions.

²To him belong three deeds executed in the castle of Arcola, in 1055, 1058, and 1059, containing gifts to the Monastery of San Venerio in the Gulf of Luni. The first of these is signed with a cross, but in the second Oberto has written his name in his own handwriting, from which it seems likely, says Litta, that to sign with a cross was a matter of custom and not a proof of ignorance. But others say that in those times only churchmen knew how to write.

³[See Litta, vol. viii. fasc. lxxv. dis. 133, tav. 1.]

⁴For instance, Pallavicino (Fleece-neighbor), Caponsacchi (Head-in-a-bag), Malatesta (Evil-head).

act that belongs to him is called the Peace of Lucca (*della pace di Lucca*), from which Muratori and Litta deduce the relationship of the Estensi, the Marchesi di Massa, and the Pallavicini with the Malaspina. Alberto, also called Marchese della Liguria, must have appeared frequently with Henry V. in his dealings with Pasquale II., and also with the Emperor Lothair, when in 1132 Innocent II. was placed in possession of Rome against the antipope Anacletus. He is mentioned for the last time among the lords who took part in the solemn congress held by Lothair at Monte Cassino in 1137 to induce the Benedictines to abandon the cause of Anacletus.

By far the most renowned of all the Malaspina is Obizzo, surnamed Il Grande, the son of Alberto Malaspina. He was one of the most important men in the history of his times, and was famous during the wars between Frederick Barbarossa and the Lombard cities. To him belongs the honor, and it is not a small one, of being the only one of the great lords, whom, although bound to the imperial cause for many reasons, the love of country finally decided to defend the independence of Italy against the encroachments of the German emperor. This honor would have been all the greater if he had been more steadfast in his allegiance to the cause, and had not fought for a time on Frederick's side with the same ardor which he had dis-

played against him. But, after all, such shifting from side to side was one of the characteristics of the times, and when we consider the ever-growing hostility which existed between the communes and the feudal lords, we cannot but be surprised to find Obizzo, who was a powerful member of the latter class, fighting on the side of his natural enemies. For a long time it had been the aim of the cities to defend their territory against the oppressions of the nobles, and the citizens were ready to take arms against them at every step. Mingled with fear and hatred of the lords, there existed in the breasts of the consular families of the cities a deep contempt, for they believed that the former were descended from the barbarian soldiers who had been rewarded for their bravery when Italy was invaded, while they boasted of their descent from the Romans of the Republic. As the cities grew in power, and the spirit of liberty constantly increased among the citizens, they not infrequently obliged the feudal lords to become their vassals. This had happened to Obizzo il Grande himself, who in 1141 was forced to swear fidelity to Piacenza for the places of Compiano and Filline; in 1145, too, he was compelled by the same city to make restitution to an abbot of Cluny, whom he had wrongfully despoiled as the latter was passing through his domain on his way to Rome.

Barbarossa was elected emperor at the Diet of

Frankfort on the 4th of March, 1152, and crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle on the 9th. His unbounded ambition caused him to turn his thoughts immediately to Italy, which he determined to bring entirely under his dominion, with the aid of the few cities which were obedient to the imperial will, and the still formidable feudal nobility, which he considered entirely vassal to the empire. He was totally unable to comprehend the spirit of liberty which was so strong in Italy, and which found no counterpart in Germany, where long years of the absolute rule of princes had deprived the people of all independent will and judgment. He therefore regarded the spirit of the Italian communes as one of rebellion, for although they were not unwilling to recognize in the emperor the supreme power, they wished nevertheless to be free, and were not willing to be governed by one man. In their magistratures nobles and artisans sat together; and in their consuls, senators, and tribunes, they had revived the ancient forms of the Roman Republic.

In 1154 Frederick arrived in Italy and was induced by the inhabitants of Pavia, who were faithful to him, to fall upon Tortona, in order that he might separate it from the Milanese, his great enemies, and unite himself with the Marchese di Monferrato. In this siege, Obizzo sided with Tortona against the emperor, but after two months the

town was obliged to surrender for lack of water, and notwithstanding a capitulation was most cruelly punished. As early as 1157, for some unknown reason, Obizzo took up arms in favor of the imperial party, and in the same year we find him allied with the inhabitants of Pavia and with Guglielmo, Marchese di Monferrato, at the defense of Vigevano. After that nothing more is said about him in connection with military affairs for a long time.

In 1160 Obizzo was obliged to contribute soldiers to the imperial guard in Pavia, where in 1161 he witnessed an agreement between Barbarossa and the Pisans, and was present in 1162 at the submission of the Genoese. In 1164 he was so entirely devoted to the imperial party that he offered himself as a vassal to the emperor, who placed his domains under imperial protection and conferred upon him the first investiture granted to this family. The possessions named in the diploma were situated in Liguria, in Lunigiana, and in the provinces of Brescia, Como, Milan, Lodi, Cremona, Piacenza, Parma, Tortona, and Bobbio. In the same year the ill-treatment of the imperial governors caused the cities of the March of Treviso to rebel, and in 1167 the Lombard league was formed, and was sworn to by all over fourteen years of age, while Barbarossa was on his way to Rome to drive out Alexander III. and to establish

an antipope. Taking advantage of an epidemic which broke out in the army, the Roman people took arms, and Frederick was obliged to flee, in order to save himself. Although surrounded by a thousand dangers, he finally reached the foot of the Apennines, where Obizzo Malaspina met him, guided him across the mountains, and conducted him safely to his faithful Pavia. In 1168 Barbarossa determined to return to Germany to collect new forces. It is in this period that Obizzo again changed sides, and in a formal treaty united himself to the Lombard league. His power was so great that this was a severe blow to the imperial cause, and many cities that had hitherto been hostile to the league followed his example. He immediately placed himself at the head of the inhabitants of Parma and Piacenza, and led the fleeing Tortonese back into their country.

When a congress was called at Venice in 1177 by the intervention of Alexander III., after Barbarossa had been defeated the previous year at Legnano in the Milanese, and was obliged to come to terms with the cities, we find Obizzo among those who were present. In 1183, after the truce of six years, we find Obizzo again at the Congress of Piacenza, where he treated in the interest of the Lombard league, and was the first to swear to observe the terms of the agreement. In the peace which was solemnized in the presence of the Em-

peror Frederick and his son Henry, King of the Romans, on the 25th of June in the same year at Constance, an article was introduced which concerned Obizzo Malaspina, who was forgiven all his offenses by the emperor. He must have died shortly after 1185, when in the Congress of Piacenza he intervened to renew the terms of agreement in regard to the Lombard league, as this is the last notice that we have of him.

The next generation of the Malaspina is important, as it marks the first division of the family into various branches. The first branch is that of the descendants of Moroello I., captain of the inhabitants of Parma in a war against Reggio in 1182, who called themselves the *Spino Fiorito*, on account of a flowering thorn on a field of gold, which they adopted as their device; the second is that of the descendants of Obizzzone, who called themselves, for a similar reason, the *Spino Secco*.

To Alberto il Moro, the third son of Obizzo il Grande, and Manfredi I., called Lancia, belongs the honor of being the first Italians to write verses in Provençal.¹ In the latter part of the twelfth cen-

¹ Gaspary, *Stor. della lett. ital.* vol. i. p. 48, Zingarelli's translation.

The chronicle of Ricordano Malespini, which for a long time was supposed to be the first written in Italian, and from which Giovanni Villani was supposed to have drawn largely without giving any credit to the author, is now conceded to have been a forgery of the fourteenth century (see *ibid.* vol. i. p. 150.) I am

tury, when the troubadours of Provence began to frequent Italy, the lords of Monferrato, of Este, of Verona, and the Malaspina, made them especially welcome at their courts, and helped to foster the love of Provençal poetry in the peninsula. Among the four most distinguished troubadours whom we find in Italy at that period, was Rambaud de Vaqueiras, who seems to have spent a great deal of time with the Malaspina.¹ In conjunction with him Alberto wrote a *tenzone*, which is still extant. A love dialogue, *Dona, a vos me comen*, is the one other poem of Alberto's which has come down to us.

The main line of the family — that is to say, the Spino Secco — is continued through Obizzone's son, Corrado, who is referred to by Dante² as *l'Antico*, and from whose four sons sprang the four principal branches of the family, taking their names, as usual, from their castles; from Alberto, the Marchesi of the Val di Trebbia; from Moroello II., those of Mulazzo; from Federico, those of Villafrauca; and from Manfredi, those of Giovagallo.

The first notice of Corrado that we find is of the year 1202, when several deeds were drawn up in which he is mentioned. I have been unable to discover what connection, if any, Saba Malaspina, who wrote a chronicle of Sicily, in the time of Frederick II., from the Guelphic standpoint, had with the family of Malaspina.

¹ Fauriel, *Dante et les origines de la langue et de la littérature italiennes*, vol. i. p. 257.

² *Purg.* viii. 119.

which many places in Lunigiana were ceded to the Malaspina by the Marchese d' Este. When Innocent III. and Otto IV. were at war with each other, because the latter aspired to the kingdom of Naples, with which Innocent had invested Frederick of Suabia, afterwards Frederick II., Corrado took part with the emperor, and vainly laid many snares for Frederick in his passage through Lombardy on his way to Germany, whither he had been sent by Innocent III., to be elected King of the Romans. When, however, Frederick was elected emperor in 1220, Corrado enrolled himself under his banner, and his name is frequently mentioned as taking part in the various battles which occurred.

In 1236 Corrado was elected governor of Piacenza, but the people, who were averse to the nobles, dismissed him, and threw themselves into the Guelphic faction. After this Corrado favored the operations of Marino d' Eboli, who commanded the imperial forces in Lombardy, and in 1241 took part in several actions against the Genoese. In 1242 he went to Sardinia with the Counts of Donoratico, to win back the lands that the Judge Chianni had ceded to the Genoese. When Frederick II. was excommunicated by Innocent IV., it looked as though Corrado had determined to join the Lombard league, but shortly after we find him again devoted to the interests of Frederick, to

whom his bravery was of great service at the siege of Parma in 1248. There the papal legate, Gregorio di Montelungo, made a sally and routed the imperial forces ; but Corrado, with a handful of soldiers, opposed his attack long enough to give the emperor time to escape. On the 20th of December, 1220, he received, together with his cousin Guglielmo, the investiture of his ample estates from Frederick ; and at the death of Guglielmo, in 1221, divided them with the latter's son, Obizzone. In this division, the river Magra, from its rise to the sea, was made the boundary of their respective estates, and to him fell the part on the right bank, with Mulazzo for its capital. It is also from this division that the two branches of the Spino Fiorito and the Spino Secco begin ;¹ Obizzone thus became the founder of the former, which as a whole adopted Guelphic principles, while as a rule the latter were Ghibellines, although many members of each branch are to be found in the opposite party.²

Of the four branches founded by Corrado's sons, that of the Val di Trebbia seems to have been of the least and that of Mulazzo of the greatest importance. Moroello II., Marchese di Mulazzo, was a Guelph, and in 1260 went to aid the Florentines, with his brothers Manfredo di Giovagallo

¹ [See above, p. 79].

² Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*, vol. viii. fasc. LXXV. dis. 133.

and Federico di Villafranca. They all seem to have been taken prisoners at the battle of Montaperti in the Sienese territory, but were liberated shortly after when peace was made.

With the next generation of the Malaspina the fourteenth century opens, and the family assumes a new and a very great importance to the student of Dante. Questions about the relation of certain of its members to Dante have for a long time engaged the serious attention of commentators, and have given rise to numerous diverse opinions. These questions, however, can never be satisfactorily answered in all their details unless new and unexpected evidence should be discovered. In fact, the greater the number of accounts that are read the greater the confusion that arises in the reader's mind as to the whole subject. For this reason it seems well to give a brief account first of the testimony in the case, and then of the conclusions which the most important writers have reached. It is the only family to which Dante accords generous praise whenever he has occasion to mention any of its members. He excepts Gherardino Malaspina from the strictures upon the clergy in his letter to the Italian cardinals; and even the passage at the end of the twenty-fourth canto of the "Inferno" can be regarded only as laudatory to Moroello III., "Vapor di Val di Magra."

II.

What evidence is there that Dante knew or had intimate relations with any member of the Malaspina family? First, the passage at the end of the eighth Canto of the "Purgatorio." In the *valle fiorita*, the Valley of the Princes, Dante meets Corrado, *il Giovine*, son of Federico, founder of the Villafranca branch, who says to him : —

" If some true intelligence
Of Valdimagra or its neighbourhood
Thou knowest, tell it me, who once was great there.
Corrado Malaspina was I called ;
I 'm not the elder, but from him descended ;
To mine I bore the love which here refineth."

To which Dante answers : —

"... Through your domains
I never passed, but where is there a dwelling
Throughout all Europe, where they are not known ?
That fame, which doeth honor to your house,
Proclaims its Signors and proclaims its land,
So that he knows of them who ne'er was there.
And, as I hope for heaven, I swear to you
Your honored family in naught abates
The glory of the purse and of the sword.
It is so privileged by use and nature,
That though a guilty head misguide the world,
Sole it goes right, and scorns the evil way."

To which Corrado : —

" Now go ; for the sun shall not lie
Seven times upon the pillow which the Ram

With all his four feet covers and bestrides,
 Before that such a courteous opinion
 Shall in the middle of thy head be nailed
 With greater nails than of another's speech,
 Unless the course of justice standeth still."

These last words have always been held to contain a prophecy that Dante would be hospitably received by the Malaspina in Lunigiana before the expiration of seven years from the date of his journey through the three kingdoms; and later discoveries have proved beyond a doubt that they were intended as such.

The second piece of evidence that Dante had intimate relations with one of the Malaspina is furnished by Boccaccio, first in his "Vita di Dante," and afterwards with more particulars in his "Commento alla Commedia," when he relates the finding of the first seven cantos of the "Inferno" in Florence, and says that they were sent to Moroello Malaspina in Lunigiana, with whom Dante was at that time, with the prayer that he would persuade the poet to finish the poem, which was evidently only commenced. Although the story is as a whole incredible, there cannot be the slightest doubt that it contains some germs of truth, as Witte has already asserted.¹ From Boccaccio down almost all the biographers of Dante, and the com-

¹ See Alessandro Torri's *Epistole di Dante Alighieri*; also *Neu aufgefundenen Briefe*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, vol. i. p. 481.

mentators of the "Divina Commedia," asserted that Dante had been welcomed in Lunigiana and hospitably treated by Moroello Malaspina. But on the 25th of September, 1765,¹ two documents were discovered in the archives of Sarzana among the acts of Parente Stupio, a notary, which threw an entirely new light upon the subject, and, while they confirmed the statement that Dante had been with the Malaspina in Lunigiana, proved that the first to befriend him had been Franceschino and not Moroello. They constitute the third and most important piece of evidence in regard to Dante's relations with the Malaspina, and show that Franceschino (and probably other members of the family) held him in high esteem. Both acts bear the same date, October 6, 1306, and have reference to the peace which was established on that day by the mediation of Dante between Antonio Camilla, Bishop and Count of Luni, of the first part, and the Lords Moroello, Franceschino, Conradino, and his brothers, Marchesi Malaspina, of the second part,² between whom wars, enmity, and hatred had arisen for a long time, from which homicides, wounds, murders, conflagrations, devastations, injuries, and many dangers had followed, and the

¹ Bartoli, *Stor. della lett. ital.* vol. vi. appendix: *I Malaspina ricordati da Dante.*

² "dominos Morroellum, Francischinum, Conradinum et fratres Marchiones Malaspina."

province of Lunigiana had been laid waste in various ways.¹

The first of the two documents, which was drawn up in the morning (*in hora prima*), is a procuration, or as we should say, a power of attorney, by which the Lord Franceschino, Marchese Malaspina, constituted and ordained Dante Alighieri of Florence his legitimate procurator, steward, agent and envoy extraordinary² to treat of peace with the Bishop of Luni. Dante is given the most absolute power to act for Franceschino (who binds himself to procure the ratification of Corradino and his brothers), and to do all those things that Franceschino himself would be able to do, regulate, and promise if he were present;³ and it is further stated that all and each thing that Dante shall have done, regulated, promised, stipulated, and procured shall be held in perpetuity established, acknowledged, and immovable under the pledge of their goods present and future.⁴

¹ "guerris, inimicitii, odiisque, subortis, ex quibus homicidia, vulnera, caedia, incendia, vasta, damna et pericula plurima sunt secuta, ac provincia Lunexanae diversi mode lacerata."

² "constituit et ordinavit suum legitimum Procuratorem, Actorem, Factorem, et Nuncium specialem, Dantem Alegerium de Florentia."

³ "quae ipse dominus Francischinus facere, gerere et promittere posset, si presens esset."

⁴ "Rata, grata et firma perpetuo habiturus omnia et singula, quae per ipsum Dantem Procuratorem in praedictis et circa praedicta, et ab ipsius dependentibus seu ipsius coherentibus et con-

The second document is the treaty of peace itself, which was signed the same day in the afternoon (*hora tertia*) in a chamber of the episcopal palace of Castelnovo, before a number of witnesses. In it the rights of the Malaspina are recognized and their many offenses forgiven. Various stipulations are agreed upon, on which it is not necessary to dwell here, and Dante, the aforesaid procurator, in the name of the procuration, and for the Lord Franceschino, and in the name and place of the Lords Moroello and Corradino, Marchesi Malaspina, made and granted to the aforesaid Venerable Father a true and perpetual peace, in regard to all and each of the aforesaid and any excesses or offenses whatsoever; and in sign of a true and everlasting peace the Lord Bishop and the aforesaid Dante kissed each other in turn.¹

These two documents prove, as I stated above, that Franceschino was the first to welcome Dante in Lunigiana; since he could not have been there long when they were signed, for on the 27th of

nexis, fuerint facta, gesta, promissa, stipulata et procurata sub obligatione bonorum suorum praesentium et futurorum."

¹ "*fecit et reddidit dicto venerabili patri . . . veram et perpetuam pacem de omnibus et singulis praedictis, et quibuslibet excessibus et offensionibus, et in signum verae et perpetuae pacis dominus venerabilis pater dominus episcopus, et Dante praedictus, sese ad invicem osculantes.*" In fact, it is said that the bishop was so pleased with the treaty, that in his will of the next year he made Franceschino his executor.

August of the same year (1306) he was witness to a contract in the house of the Papafava at Padua.¹ They further prove that there was more than one member of the family who at that time bore the name of Maorello, Maroello, Murruello, Moruello, Moroello, Morello, Marcello, Muriello, as it is variously spelled ; of this more anon.

In regard to the identity of Franceschino there has never been the slightest doubt. He was the son of Moroello II., founder of the Mulazzo branch, and had two brothers and two sisters. Elena, one of the sisters, was the wife of Giberto da Correggio, Lord of Parma. Bernabò, one of the brothers, a very interesting character, was a monk, probably of the Benedictine order, and succeeded his cousin Gherardino in the Bishopric of Luni in 1321. The first notice that has come down to us in regard to Franceschino² belongs to the year 1285, in which he concurred in the sale of Madrignano to Cubitosa d' Este, wife of Isnardo, son of Obizzino, of the Spino Fiorito. On the 16th of November, 1296, he made a family compact with Moroello, the son of Manfredi, and Obizzino, the son of Fede-

¹ [See Imbriani, *Il documento carrarese che pruova Dante in Padova ai venzette di Agosto*, M.CCCVI. Pomigliano d' Arco, 1881. The document itself is reprinted in the Tenth Annual Report of the Dante Society of Cambridge, Mass.] Luigi Staffetti (*I Malaspina ricordati da Dante*, Bartoli, *Stor. d. lett. it.*, vol. vi. appendix) says the twenty-fourth August, which is manifestly a mistake.

² Litta, *Famiglie celebri ital.*, vol. viii.

rico, his cousin, that the possessions of the Malaspina should never be bequeathed to others than relatives. In 1304, profiting by the disorders occasioned by the Guelphs and Ghibellines, which rendered Pontremoli unsafe, he seized the valleys of Tegli and Rossano, dependencies of that city. Later on in the same year he became captain of the league of the Tuscan Guelphs. In 1308, however, he seems to have become a Ghibelline, for in that year he went to the aid of Giberto da Correggio, when the Guelph inhabitants of Parma shook off his yoke. On the 19th of June he fought in a battle in which the Parmesans were conquered; and perchance it was there, says Stafetti, that Giberto gave him as a reward the castle of Rocca Sazulina, which afterwards became the cause of so many quarrels between the Malaspina and the Parmesans. In May, 1309, Giaimo II. of Aragon ceded certain lands in Sardinia to him, because of the aid which he and his relatives had given to him against the Pisans. When Henry VII. came to Italy in 1310, Franceschino went with his cousin Moroello, according to Litta, to pay him homage; and in 1311 he was made imperial vicar at Parma, from whence his brother-in-law, Giberto, had been driven out. But Franceschino was recalled in the same year; and it is then that he treacherously introduced the Ghibelline faction into Sarzana. After the death of Henry

VII. in 1313 nothing further is heard of him, and he is supposed to have died shortly afterward: Litta thinks in 1319. He was certainly dead in 1321, as a deed of that year speaks of his sons as minors, under the tutelage of Castruccio Castracani.

It could be wished that any evidence as incontrovertible as that cited above might be adduced to establish Dante's relations with any other member of the family. That he knew others of the Malaspina, and more especially some at least of those who are mentioned in the treaty of peace, there can be little doubt. Have we any evidence more positive and accurate that Dante knew a Moroello Malaspina, than that of Giovanni Boccaccio and the numerous commentators who have followed his lead? Now that the best criticism denies the genuineness of the letter of Frate Ilario,¹ the dedication by Dante of the "Purgatorio" to a Moroello Malaspina falls to the ground. But we still have one piece of evidence which thus far the majority of commentators have accepted, although the skeptical Bartoli² has cast doubts on it, and Scartazzini has stamped it as a "stupid imposture."³ It is the letter⁴ which Dante wrote to Moroello Mala-

¹ [See Bartoli, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. v. chap. 12; Maeri-Leone, Introduction to his edition of Boccaccio's *Vita di Dante*.]

² [*Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. v. p. 187.]

³ [*Dante Handbook*, Davidson's translation, p. 229.]

⁴ [The third letter of this collection.]

spina, and which was one of those found by Carl Witte in the Library of the Vatican.¹ It must be acknowledged without further delay that it is a most unsatisfactory piece of evidence in every way, and has given rise to not a few discussions and hypotheses. Everything about it is hidden in mystery; its contents are enigmatical; its date uncertain; and last, though by no means least, the identity of the person to whom it is addressed cannot be satisfactorily determined, now that it has been discovered that in the first part of the fourteenth century, not one, but *four* of the Malaspina bore the name of Moroello. They are Moroello III. "Vapor di Val di Magra," son of Manfredi, Marchese di Giovagallo, — the most renowned of them; Moroello IV., the son of Obizzino, the son of Federico, Marchese di Villafranca; Moroello V., the son of Franceschino, the son of Moroello II., Marchese di Mulazzo; Moroello, the son of Alberto, Marchese of Bobbio or of Val di Trebbia. Thus it will be seen that a member of each branch of the family bore the name of Moroello. To which of them was the letter addressed? Moroello V. can be excluded immediately from the discussion, as a deed bearing the date of February 26, 1321, speaks of him as still a minor under the tutelage of the famous Castracani.² Each of the other three has had advocates, and with more or less reason.

¹ [See *Dante-Forschungen*, vol. i. p. 488.]

² [See Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni*, index.]

Of Moroello, Marchese of Bobbio or of Val di Trebbia, little or nothing is known, unless certain deeds are attributed to him instead of to Moroello di Giovagallo.¹ He was the only son of Alberto, who died about 1296, and left him heir to Bobbio and Val di Trebbia, which he had obtained in the division of 1266. He married Giovanna di Vagi, by whom he had three sons: Corradino, Jacopino, and Manfredino. He died about 1313.

In regard to Moroello III., Marchese di Giovagallo, and Moroello IV., Marchese di Villafranca, great confusion exists, and it is impossible to decide with absolute certainty to which of the two certain acts belong. Each commentator in advocating the cause of one or the other for the honor of having befriended Dante seems to have appropriated whatever facts would strengthen the argument in favor of his candidate. The difficulty in identifying either one or the other with certain acts arises from the fact that in many of the documents in which one of them figures he is merely mentioned as "*Dns Moroellus Malaspina*," without designation of the branch to which he belonged.²

Moroello III., unlike the majority of his family, was a Guelph, and it is in all probability he whom

¹ This is the opinion of Staffetti. It seems to me highly probable.

² See the Treaty of Peace and Act of Procuration, in Fraticelli, *Vita di Dante*, p. 199.

the Florentines chose as a leader against the Ghibelline town of Arezzo in 1288. In 1297 he was elected by the Guelphs of Bologna, who were in power, as their captain-general in their war against Azzo, Marchese d'Este, and Maghinardo degli Ubaldini da Susinana, and in the following year was made podestà. In 1299 he joined forces with Francesco, son of Bernabò, Marchese d'Olivola of the Spino Fiorito, attacked the Bishop of Luni, and seized Carrara and Avenza. It seems probable, though not certain, that he is the Moroello who was called to Milan by Matteo Visconti in the same year (1299) to take command of the army against the Marchese di Monferrato. And, says Staffetti, he bore himself in such a manner as to confirm the reputation that he had won of a brave leader and wise statesman; but Litta, who believes that the Moroello called to Milan was the Marchese di Villafranca, says that he did not have occasion to fight, as he had hardly arrived when peace was made. He figures frequently from 1301 to 1307 in Tuscany, where the captainship of the Neri was conferred upon him; and he acquired great fame in the war against the Ghibellines of Pistoia.

In the seventh bolgia of the eighth circle of the "Inferno" (xxiv. 140-151) Dante meets Vanni Fucci, the Pistoiese thief, who, full of wrath at being recognized, says: —

" But that thou mayst not such a sight enjoy,
 If thou shalt e'er be out of the dark places,
 Thine ears to my announcement ope and hear:
 Pistoia first of Neri groweth meagre;
 Then Florence doth renew her men and manners;
 Mars draws a vapor up from Val di Magra,
 Which is with turbid clouds enveloped round,
 And with impetuous and bitter tempest
 Over Campo Pisen shall be the battle;
 When it shall suddenly rend the mist asunder,
 So that each Bianco shall thereby be smitten.
 And this I've said that it may give thee pain."

In commenting on these lines the critics have
 always said that Moroello, Marchese di Giova-
 gallo, was alluded to in the words, —

" Tragge Marte vapor di Val di Magra,"

and that in the lines following, the fight in the
 plain of Piteccio was prophesied. The circum-
 stances of the encounter were as follows. After
 being driven from Florence many of the Bianchi
 took refuge in Pistoia. But they were not allowed
 to remain there in peace, for in June of 1302 the
 Lucchese, who had allied themselves with the
 Florentines, sent an army thither under the com-
 mand of Moroello, Marchese di Giovagallo. The
 allied forces encamped near the Ponte Bonello,
 about a mile from Pistoia, and after devastating
 the country round about laid siege to Serravalle.
 The Bianchi of Pistoia put as large an army into
 the field as they could muster, and went forth to

meet the enemy; but on their approach Moroello directed a fierce onslaught upon them and defeated them in the plain of Piteccio — or “Campo Piceno,” as Dante calls it, — which lies between Serravalle and Montecatini.¹ The surrender of Serravalle and Pistoia followed. In 1305 the Lucchese and Florentines, under the command of Moroello, again besieged Pistoia, which was defended by Tolosato degli Uberti;² and notwithstanding the entreaties of Clement V. that the combatants should lay down their arms, the siege lasted eleven months, until Pistoia again surrendered, April 10, 1306. It was now agreed that the city should receive her podestà from Florence and her captain of the people from Lucca; and the Lucchese chose Moroello as the first for that honor. In 1307 he was chosen captain of the Guelphic league of Tuscany. “But,” says Staffetti, “it seems that he returned to Lunigiana at the end of that year, for a document of that time states that he received the acknowledgment of a debt of one hundred and fifty florins from his cousin Francesco Marchese d’ Olivola at Verrucoletta.” A Moroello, who is believed to have been the Marchese di Giovagallo, was called to Florence to ratify the withdrawal of the interdict conceded to the Florentines by Clement V., and to be a witness of the

¹ [See Staffetti, in Bartoli, *op. cit.*, vol. vi. p. 283.]

² [See Villani, viii. 82.]

reconciliation of the Commune with the Holy See. Litta says that he remained to defend Florence when Tuscany was invaded by Henry VII., and that when the emperor died at Buonconvento in 1313, Moroello was still in Tuscany, and fought on the side of the Guelphs of Lucca. But of this there seems to be some doubt. Witte¹ says, but without mentioning his authorities, that serious dissensions had arisen between Moroello and the Guelphs of Florence in 1308. Gerini,² with whom Staffetti agrees, thinks that the Moroello, or Marcello, who was at Florence at that time, was the brother of Corradino, son of Obizzino, Marchese di Villafranca. He also believes that Moroello III. was he whom Henry VII. sent as imperial vicar to Brescia in 1311.³ This seems to me most probable, as it can hardly be believed, the assertions of Litta and others notwithstanding, that a man so young and inexperienced as Moroello, Marchese di Villafranca, could have been made the vicar of a town of such importance as Brescia. In 1314 he acted as peacemaker between his cousin Franceschino di Mulazzo and Cardinal Luca

¹ *Neu aufgefundenen Briefe*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, vol. i. p. 480.

² I am sorry not to have been able to see Gerini's *Memorie storiche di Lunigiana*. I do not think there is a copy to be found in America.

³ See an extract quoted by Torri in his edition of the *Letters*, p. 16.

del Fiesco. He must have died soon after, because in a bull of indulgence conceded in the following year to Alagia del Fiesco, she is spoken of as the widow of Moroello.¹

Moroello IV. was the son of Obizzino, and the nephew of Corrado il Giovine, whom Dante met in Purgatory, and hence the grandson of Federico, the first Marchese di Villafranca. He and his brothers Corradino, Manfredi, Federico, Azzone, and Giovanni are among those mentioned in the treaty of peace which Dante concluded between the Malaspina and the Bishop of Luni in 1306. Litta, in beginning his account of him, says: "I believe that he is the one who was called to Milan in 1299 by Matteo Visconti to take command of the forces against the Marchese di Monferrato." But this can hardly have been possible, as an inventory of the property left by Obizzone, dated June 22, 1301, speaks of him and his brothers as minors under the guardianship of their mother, Tobia

¹ Alagia del Fiesco was the daughter of Niccolò dei Fieschi, Count of Lavagna, and is praised in the nineteenth canto of the *Purgatorio*, where Dante causes her uncle, Pope Adrian V., to say: —

"On earth I have a grandchild named Alagia,
Good in herself, unless indeed our house
Malevolent may make her by example."

From these words several commentators have concluded that Dante knew Alagia during his stay in Lunigiana, but there is no proof of this.

Spinola.¹ And from an act of 1302 among the archives of Caniparola it would seem that the sons of Obizzone were still minors, as in it their mother received in their name the taxes of Arcola and Villafranca. Litta goes on to say that in 1309 Moroello IV. was in Sarzana, where he assisted in a truce between the Guelphs and Ghibellines; and that on the arrival of Henry VII. he went to Milan to pay him honor, and was a witness to the reconciliation between the Guelphs and Ghibellines of Novara, celebrated before the emperor. This last may be true, but the Novarese treaty of peace merely mentions a "Marchese Malespina" among the witnesses, without designating which Moroello it was, or indeed whether it was a Moroello at all.² It seems more likely that Moroello IV. was at the defense of Florence when Tuscany was invaded by Henry VII., and that Moroello III. was sent as vicar to Brescia, as I have stated above.³

Which, then, of the three who bore the name of Moroello was Dante's friend? To which did he address the letter "*Ne lateant dominum?*" In

¹ Litta seems to think that only Azzone, Federico and Giovanni were minors in 1301.

² See Staffetti, *op. cit.*, p. 280. He also cites other evidence to the same effect.

³ From the short account that I have given it will be seen how little is really known of the two men, and also how inextricably confused with each other they are; it is absolutely impossible to decide with any degree of certainty to which many of the facts relating to a Moroello belong.

trying to answer these two questions, which in reality resolve themselves into one, I shall first examine what some of the principal critics have said, and then give my own conclusions.

Emanuele Repetti seems to have been the first to speak of the new ideas which necessarily had arisen in regard to Dante's sojourn in Lunigiana after the discovery of the two documents relative to the peace between the Malaspina and the Bishop of Luni. Several years later, in 1827, he wrote a second article which appeared in the "*Antologia di Firenze*," with the addition of a genealogical tree of the Malaspina. In it he brought to light a third Moroello, the father of Franceschino, and the founder of the Mulazzo branch of the family; a second Moroello, the son of Franceschino, had already been discovered by Troya.¹ After a very superficial argument, in which he uses the method of exclusion, he concludes that the only possible friend of Dante was Moroello III. He proceeds somewhat as follows: "Who was the famous Marchese Moroello to whom, according to Frate Ilario, Filippo Villani, and Boccaccio, Dante dedicated the '*Purgatorio*?' It could not have been the father of Franceschino, because he had died in Sardinia twenty years or more before. It could not have been the son, I think, since at his tender age he could not have attained such renown as to

¹ *Veltro di Dante*, p. 810.

be called a most famous person (*solennissimo personaggio*); and much less could it be the son of Obizzino, because in 1306 this third Moroello was still a minor. There alone remains, among so many Moroelli, the brave Malaspina, conqueror of the Ghibellines at Piceno, Serravalle, and Pistoia, called by Dante *il vapor di Val di Magra*. But who will believe that Dante would dedicate his most beautiful work to the ferocious Captain of the Lucchese, whose triumphs helped to drive the Bianchi from Florence, and to render every hope of return vain? This would not be strange if the dedication of the Second Canticle is put off until 1311 or shortly after, since at that time Moroello had become a Ghibelline, and is the same who was sent to Brescia in April, 1311, by Henry VII."

Only two mistakes in this need be pointed out. Franceschino's son, Moroello V., must have been of a very "tender age" indeed at that time, as he was still a minor in 1321; whereas, Moroello IV., Obizzino's son, was not a minor at all, as the treaty of peace with the Bishop of Luni amply testifies.

In the following year (1828) Gerini published his "Memorie storiche di Lunigiana," and brought to light another Moroello: the son of Alberto, Marchese di Val di Trebbia.¹ In endeavoring to solve

¹ By an error, perhaps of typography, he speaks of Alberto di

the vexed question as to who was the Vicar of Brescia, and the one to whom Dante was believed to have dedicated the "Purgatorio," he pursues the method of elimination in much the same way that Repetti had done. He excludes Franceschino's father and son for the same reasons; the son of Obizzino because of his youth; the son of Alberto because he died before the Emperor Henry came to Italy. He concludes that the question can be decided only in one of two ways: either by considering the dedication supposititious or by granting it to "Morcello, called *il vapor di Val di Magra*, since up to this point no one is found more worthy than he." "And although," he continues; "we do not know with certainty that he became a Ghibelline in becoming so benevolent to Dante, we are sure that for several years he contended with the Guelphs for the property of the Ammannati (of Pistoia); that in 1313 in Rusca, the estate of the Fieschi, he set at liberty some inhabitants of Cremona and Bergamo who were held in his castle of Croce, in Val di Trebbia, on account of taxes; that, according to the story of Padre Campi, at that time (1314) he took the part of Cardinal Luca del Fiesco, with whom Franceschino di Mulazzo was at odds; and finally, that Dante praised the virtues of Alagia, Morcello's

Mulazzo. [The quotation on pp. 102-3 is taken from Torri, *Epistole di Dante*, note to Letter III.]

wife, in the 'Purgatorio.' From all these facts it seems to me not to be disputed that in his second coming to Lunigiana, the exiled Dante found a generous soul in the accomplished Moroello di Giovagallo, and that looking only to his great merit, he suppressed somewhat the grief of past wrongs, and was prompted to offer him the wonderful cantos of the 'Purgatorio.' "

In 1838 Witte published an article entitled "Neu aufgefundenene Briefe des Dante Allighieri,"¹ in which he spoke of the letters that had been discovered by him, among which was one addressed to the Marchese Moroello Malaspina, who, he decides, — apparently without very much difficulty, — could be none other than the Marchese di Giovagallo, and who, he erroneously states, was the son of Manfredi Lancia. He goes on to say that several critics have maintained, not without reason, that it seemed impossible that Moroello Malaspina could have received Dante in 1306, because he was an ardent leader of the opposite party. But two years after things took on an entirely different aspect; "the apparent mediation of Clement V. had little by little drawn the parties more closely together; Dante had, as is known, lost every hope of seeing the cause of the Ghibellines triumphant, and in 1308 great dissensions had arisen between Moroello and the Guelphs of

¹ [See *Dante-Forschungen*, vol. i. p. 473.]

Florence. Therefore, when in 1309 or 1310 we see the poet, who was already a friend of the Malaspina family, tightening the bonds of friendship with its head, notwithstanding that he had fought against the Ghibellines,¹ we are less surprised, and still less when a little more than a year later we see this same Moroello highly esteemed by Henry VII., by whom he was sent to Brescia with the honorable title of Imperial Vicar." In all of this Witte agrees with Repetti and Gerini, and he seems not to have the slightest thought that some of the circumstances which he has attributed to Moroello di Giovagallo might possibly have belonged to some other member of the family bearing the same name, to whom the letter might also have been written. He adds that the letter, which, as we have seen above, he assigns to the year 1309 or 1310, "proves to our great surprise that even before the expedition of Henry VII. to Rome the poet might have found a protector in Moroello, as in fact he did; it proves besides that the opinions of the ancient biographers of Dante are not at all erroneous; and that the modern writers are wrong in refusing to recognize in Franceschino, Marchese di Mulazzo, another

¹ Dante was not a real but an ideal Ghibelline; and the fact that Moroello III. had fought against his party might have had little weight with him. He was the friend of Franceschino, Marchese di Mulazzo, who had been captain of the Tuscan Guelphs in 1304, and he died the friend of another Guelph.

host of Dante. The account of the finding of the early cantos of the 'Inferno' and the returning of them to the author, may be true in the main, but altered in some details. Perhaps the papers which he had left in Florence contained some of the *canzoni* published afterwards by him in his 'Convito;' perhaps Dino Frescobaldi, of whom Boccaccio makes mention, had sent them to Franceschino, at that time Dante's host, who later was confounded with the celebrated Moroello, and perhaps this same fact of the papers' being returned to him was one of the motives which prompted Dante to finish the 'Convito.'"¹

It will be noticed that Gerini speaks of Dante's second visit to Lunigiana, and that Witte hints at the same thing; but there are no documents to prove that Dante went there more than once, and now the best criticism entirely discredits such an hypothesis. Indeed, it would seem as though it had been made to reconcile the statement of the old commentators, that *il vapor di Val di Magra* was that Moroello Malaspina who had shown such kindness to Dante when he had sought a refuge with him as an exile, with the fact that Dante could not possibly have known Moroello di

¹ If Dante wrote a part of the *Convito* while a guest of some member of the Malaspina family in Lunigiana, it is most strange that the work contains no mention of, or reference to, either the place or the family; but a careful reading of the *Convito* does not reveal the slightest trace of such a mention.

Giovagallo when he was in Lunigiana in 1306, as the former was at that time Captain of the People at Pistoia, and hence absent.

In 1839 Balbo published his "*Vita di Dante*," but although he devoted a good part of a chapter to the Malaspina (Bk. ii. chap. 6), he added nothing of any particular value to the discussion.

In 1842 Alessandro Torri published his edition of the "*Epistole*," and in a note to the Letter to Moroello Malaspina was the first to put forward Moroello, the son of Alberto, Marchese di Bobbio or Val di Trebbia, and cousin of Moroello III., son of Manfredi, as the Malaspina to whom it was addressed. "Otherwise," he says, "if we wish to ascribe the letter to Moroello III., we are forced to explain away the aversion which at that time Dante must have felt for the leader of the hostile party to which he attributed the disgrace of his own banishment; whereas it would seem that a common sympathy existed between Dante and Moroello, son of Alberto, since in his name and that of his cousin Franceschino (Dante's first host) Dante made the treaty of peace with the Bishop of Luni, leaving to the other Moroello the responsibility of a compromise." He calls especial attention to the fact that the letter was written before Dante's second visit to Lunigiana in 1309; and agrees with Gerini, from whose work he makes a long extract, that it was then that the poet became

a friend of Moroello III., Marchese di Giovagallo.

As Staffetti has already pointed out,¹ Torri has confused Moroello, Marchese di Bobbio, with Moroello IV., the son of Obizzino, Marchese di Villafranca. The Marchese di Bobbio had no part whatever in the treaty of peace, whereas mention is made several times of "Morroellus et Conradinus fratres," a phrase which certainly designates the Marchese di Villafranca.

The next to attempt a solution of this much vexed question was Fraticelli: first in a article entitled "Chi fossero i due Malaspina, amici ed ospiti di Dante," which was afterwards published in his "Storia della Vita di Dante;" and later on in a short preface to the Letter to Moroello, in his "Opere minori di Dante." It will suit our convenience best to speak of the later attempt first.

After saying that there were three Moroelli (Moroello III., Moroello the son of Obizzino Marchese di Villafranca, and Moroello V. the son of Franceschino di Mulazzo, whom he discards immediately on account of his extreme youth), Fraticelli states erroneously that Torri advocated the cause of Moroello di Villafranca, because "it seems improbable that in the few months of Dante's sojourn in Lunigiana in 1306 he could have formed a

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 296.

friendship with the fierce captain of the Neri, Moroello di Giovagallo, even if he had wished; because the treaty of peace of 1306 proved that Dante's friends were Marchesi Franceschino di Mulazzo and Moroello di Villafranca; and because, it may be added, it seems strange that Dante should direct a letter and a *canzone* speaking of love to an old and fierce soldier." He then quotes a long extract from Witte, whom he proceeds to confute; and concludes that the questions in regard to the letter are very intricate, and that he is unable to answer them.

In his first article, Fraticelli decides from the documents of 1306 that Dante's friends were Franceschino di Mulazzo and Moroello di Villafranca, "since a Franceschino and a Moroello are among those Malaspina who gave Dante such a delicate mission as that of treating and concluding a peace." His argument in regard to Franceschino is conclusive; no one doubts that the Franceschino mentioned in the documents is the Marchese di Mulazzo. He also proves that "Moroellus et Conradinus fratres" were the sons of Obizzino, Marchese di Villafranca. His arguments that Moroello di Villafranca was Dante's friend would be valid enough, had not Staffetti, who so far as I know is the last to have written on the subject, proved conclusively, in the article which I have already cited several times, that there are

two Moroelli mentioned in the document of 1306 instead of one — a fact that several seem to have suspected already. One of these was undoubtedly Moroello IV., Marchese di Villafranca; and the other with great reason is supposed to have been Moroello III., Marchese di Giovagallo, as it is well known that he had attacked the Bishop of Luni in 1299, and had seized Avenza and Carrara; while there is no proof that the other Moroello, the Marchese di Bobbio, ever had any quarrel with that prelate. Moreover, the Moroello whom Franceschino would induce to ratify the treaty was evidently absent.¹ This would certainly strengthen the belief that it was Moroello di Giovagallo, who was at that time Captain of the People at Pistoia.

After all these discussions we are left very nearly where we were at the beginning, and the question which of the three Malaspina bearing the name of Moroello was Dante's correspondent is still far from being incontrovertibly decided. I will now state in as few words as possible my own conclusions in the matter.

It is well to decide first what we know positively in regard to the subject, and then to see what conclusions can be drawn. The documents of 1306 prove decisively that Dante was in Lunigiana

¹ "ipse dominus Francischinus inducet, si poterit, ipsum dominum Morroellum ad omnia suprascripta et infrascripta ratificanda."

on the 6th of October of that year, acted as procurator for Franceschino di Mulazzo, and promised in his name to obtain the ratification of Corradino and his brothers, among whom of course was Moroello IV., to the treaty within fifteen days,¹ and if he were able that of Moroello, evidently Marchese di Giovagallo, who was absent at Pistoia. There can be no reasonable doubt that Dante knew the other parties to the treaty, besides Franceschino, who were present, viz.: Moroello di Villafranca and his brothers. Is there, then, any evidence at all that he knew either Moroello di Giovagallo, or Moroello Marchese di Bobbio or Val di Trebbia? So little is known about the latter that it is impossible to state with any certainty whether Dante knew him or not, but there is little reason to suppose that he did, — at all events at this time, for his estates were not in Lunigiana, but in the Val di Trebbia, and he was not one of those mentioned in the treaty. As we have seen, Moroello III., Vapor di Val di Magra, was in Pistoia when the treaty was signed; nor is it at all probable that he was in Lunigiana at any time during Dante's sojourn, — at all events certainly not long enough for the poet to become his friend, even if other things did not render this unlikely; for he was elected captain of the Guelphic league of

¹ "promisit quod omnia suprascripta et infrascripta pro ipso et fratribus suis infra XV dies a celebratione praesentis contractus ratificabit et approbabit."

Tuscany in 1307, and was absent from Lunigiana until the end of that year, when in all probability Dante had departed, although it is uncertain when he went or whither.

From all this we see that it is extremely doubtful that Dante knew any Moroello (at least in 1306), except the Marchese di Villafranca. Nor is it probable that he ever returned to Lunigiana;¹ so that he could not have met there at a later date either of the other two bearing the name, whatever he may have done elsewhere.

Did Dante then write the letter to Moroello, Marchese di Villafranca? In order to answer this question with any degree of certainty it is necessary to know the date of the letter; and that is absolutely impossible. Witte has assigned it to the year 1309-10, but simply and solely because he realized that in 1306 it was impossible that Dante should have written such an epistle to the man who had driven the Bianchi from Pistoia, and was then there as Captain of the People. The date assigned to it by Torri and Fraticelli is 1307, and certainly this seems reasonable.

After giving his reasons for writing the letter, Dante goes on to say: "Accordingly, after my departure from the threshold of the Court, for which I have since longed, and in which, as you

¹ [See Scartazzini, *Prologomeni della Divina Commedia*, p. 92.]

often marvelled to behold, it was my privilege to be enlisted in the service of liberty, barely had I set foot by the streams of Arno," etc. These words offer strong evidence that the letter was written but shortly after Dante's departure from the court of the Malaspina. That the Court referred to is that of the Malaspina and not that of Florence, I think there can be but little doubt. For would Dante, the passionate exile, who now lashed Florence with such irony and anger, as a depraved land (*Inf.* xvi. 9), full of envy (*Inf.* vi. 49-50), a nest of malice (*Inf.* xv. 78), and again spoke of it in the tenderest terms, as the fair fold (*Par.* xxv. 5), where he had slept a lamb, as the most beautiful daughter of Rome, in whose sweetest breast he desired with all his heart to rest his wearied soul and to end the time that still was given him (*Convito*, i. 3), — would he have spoken of it simply as the "court for which I have since longed," and that, too, in a letter of this confidential character? Certainly, if he did so, it is the only time. If, then, Dante went but once to Lunigiana — namely, in October of 1306, — and wrote this letter but shortly after his departure, perhaps from one of the castles of the Counts Guidi, he could have written it only to Moroello IV., Marchese di Villafranca.

It has been objected that Dante could not have written such a letter to so young a man. But this

hardly seems valid. If the letter is what many suppose it to be — a simple confession that Dante had become enamored of a woman suited in all respects to his inclinations, his character, and his fortunes, — he would have been just as likely to write it to a young man as to a middle-aged and hardened warrior. If we are to believe Litta, the Marchese di Villafranca was not a minor in 1301, and was sent as imperial vicar to Brescia in 1311, in which case he was certainly of sufficient age and importance to be the recipient of such a confidence. But this is all involved in doubt, and it seems more probable that Moroello III. was the imperial vicar. In any case Moroello di Villafranca had passed his majority, and may have reached the age of twenty-five, supposing him to have attained his majority shortly after the document of 1302 in the archives of Caniparola, when his youth would not have stood in his way, especially at a time when men seem to have matured earlier, and to have been taken into the confidence of their elders sooner, than at the present day.

If discussions have arisen in regard to the identity of the recipient of the letter, the contents have proved no less enigmatical, and have given rise to many diverse suppositions. As Bartoli says: “Everything about it is obscure and impenetrable, — to whom it was directed, when it was written, and what it means. Between him who absurdly

sees in it a simple letter about love, a candid confession of Dante's passion for the woman of the Casentino with the *goitre*, and him who like Troya supposes it to be a cipher treating of secret political negotiations, the abyss is great."¹ In another place,² in speaking of the poem, "*Amor, dacchè convien pur ch' io mi doglia*," which, as Witte, Torri, Fraticelli, and he agree, accompanied the letter, he himself supplies an hypothesis which cannot be ranked among the least remarkable in cleverness and ingenuity, but which is much too far-fetched and unnatural to be seriously entertained by sober criticism. After marvelling that Dante could have written the letter at all, and that he could have chosen for such a confidence, "more suitable to twenty than to forty years of age, that Nero, who

. . . 'shall rend the mist asunder,
So that each Bianco shall thereby be smitten,'"

he gives the letter entire. He then quotes the last lines of the *canzone*, and goes on to say: "It was not sufficient to have chosen Malaspina as a confidant of his own love affair; he (Dante) must even dedicate to Florence the poem that celebrated that love — to that hostile Florence that locked him without the fair fold, *il bello ovile* — he,

'An enemy to the wolves that war upon it,'

¹ *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. v. p. 187.

² [*Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 277.]

he who later would compare the immodest city to the *Barbagia di Sardigna*, and who would thus fiercely exclaim against the *sfacciate donne fiorentine*; who would then express the hope of returning *with other voice* (*con altra voce*); — no longer, that is, a singer of the love of women, but of things lofty and divine, — he must now send this *canzone* that concerned his amour with a peasant of the Alps, and must even send it saying: ‘If even you should recall me to your bosom, I would not come, for the love of a woman chains me here.’” Bartoli is in no way surprised at any love affair of Dante’s, even for a woman with the *goitre*. But he is surprised that Dante should have been willing thus to divulge it, unspeakably surprised that he should have written that letter to a Malaspina, and directed that poem to Florence.

“But suppose,” he continues, “that Dante, mindful of a Latin writer who was known to him, had imagined that on the banks of the Arno the vision of Florence had appeared to him, as Lucan caused the vision of Rome to appear to Cæsar on the banks of the Rubicon,” — in other words, suppose that the woman Dante met by the streams of Arno was no woman of flesh and blood, but merely an allegory of the city of Florence. With this hypothesis, which he wishes it to be well understood is nothing but an hypothesis, both the letter and the *canzone* acquire a new significance in his eyes,

and all discrepancies vanish. Everything in the letter, he says, conforms perfectly to the figure of the personified city.

He next takes the letter and the *canzone*, and analyzes them bit by bit to prove his thesis. The *curia* referred to, he says, is the Court of Florence. A confession is contained in the letter, but a very different one from what many have supposed ; and he finds it in the opening paragraph. "What are the reports," he says, "that Dante fears, which, passing from mouth to mouth, are wont to sow the seeds of false impressions, and proclaim that he had been made a captive through negligence? The reports, I understand, of a new love, which perchance had arisen from a false interpretation of the poem, 'Amor, dacchè convien pur ch' io mi doglia.' For this reason the poet sends it to Malaspina with a letter, which, according to his conception, could not do otherwise than clearly explain the nature of the new love sung by him." Bartoli concludes that however absurd the supposition might be that Dante should recount his susceptibility to love to the Malaspina who conquered the Bianchi at Serravalle, so much the more natural it becomes that he should justify himself to him,—with a justification conceived in a Dantesque manner, but still a justification. This interpretation, however, I think open to very serious question. In the first place, Bartoli does not tell

us how Moroello, the hardened warrior, should have understood this extremely Dantesque justification. In the second place, it seems no more natural that Dante should write a justification of himself to a fierce leader of the Neri, who in all probability knew little about love verses and cared still less, than any other kind of a letter, especially if he did not know him personally ; and this, as we have seen, is extremely doubtful, though not without the range of possibility at the date which has been generously assigned to the letter.

Next Bartoli takes the *canzone*, and, in analyzing it, finds many things that render it not improbable that Florence should be hidden under the representation of a woman. All goes well until he comes to the last few lines, where certainly his interpretation becomes very weak and the allegory shows a strange lack of correspondence. He says that the first line of the envoi,

“My little mountain Song, thou go’st thy way,”

is to be taken in connection with *andar mi fane* of the third stanza, as if to say : “ *I* can only go in thought, in ardent desire ; *you* go in reality ; you will see Florence : —

‘ And Florence, my fair city, thou may’st see,
Which ’gainst me bars her gates,
And is of pity stript, of love devoid.’

"Tell her, O my *canzone*, that even if the cruelty of her citizens should be now relaxed, I am no longer at liberty, no longer have I power to return, because here I am bound, I am chained, I am held by her image ; because, in other words, I am enamored of that vision which appeared to me

'amid the alps,
And in the valley of the flood,
Along whose shore thy strength I ever feel ;'

and in returning, I should separate myself from it to find myself in the midst of the base ones who banished me."

All this is extremely fanciful, to say the least. It is very much as if a lover were kept away from his mistress, because he had formed a certain ideal of her which he worshipped, and would not go to her even if besought, on account of certain faults which he knew her to possess ; and in consequence hugged his ideal in solitude. There are no such flaws to be found in Dante's allegory, the parts of which always correspond in the most minute particulars. A question arises in my mind whether, after all, Gaspary's simple solution of the problem is not the correct one. He says that Dante's love was manifestly pure and platonic, such as would inspire poetry ; and that only to such a spiritual sentiment as the root of poetry could Dante attribute sufficient importance to write of it to a

prince. A new love certainly seemed in contradiction to Dante's position at that time and to his mode of thought; nevertheless, he who for this reason refuses to credit this account of love, or declares the letter apocryphal, or together with the *canzone*, allegorical, does not at all understand the contradictions of the human heart.¹

To the Italian critics such a love is apparently unknown; to them there is no middle course. Some of them would have Dante immaculate, a saint or something superhuman; others would make him a mere sensualist; and all seem to forget that with all his sublime, his godlike genius — or rather because of it — he had the passionate susceptibility and sensitiveness to beauty of the poet. To us who believe in the historical Beatrice — Beatrice, the daughter of Folco Portinari — there is nothing strange or impossible about such a love, for in the “Vita Nuova” we have the very ideal of a pure and platonic passion, from which every thought that pertains to the senses is banished. Dante had felt it for Beatrice to an overwhelming degree; is there anything unreasonable in supposing him to have been moved in the same manner again, though of course only in a transient way, when he met a woman, as he says, suited in all respects to his principles, his character, and his fortunes?

¹ [*Stor. della lett. ital.* vol. i. p. 459, Zingarelli's translation.]

The questions in regard to the letter are, however, far from being definitely settled; nor does it seem possible that they can ever be settled. In concluding this part of my subject, I can do no better than to quote Staffetti. "In regard to the Moroelli, there is no certainty, from the documents relating to the peace, that Dante was a friend of any of them. To the Frate Ilario letter no weight is to be given; and the other, 'Ne lateant dominum,'¹ whether authentic or not, will always remain a document of too uncertain signification to construct any serious conjecture upon. From all this, then, it is necessary to draw this final conclusion: we can be certain only that Franceschino Malaspina was in friendly relations with Dante."²

III.

No essay on the Malaspina, no matter how imperfect, would be at all complete without some attempt to discover the reasons for their loss of power and influence.

There are two main causes for the decline in power of many of the great families of Italy. The first is the growth in power of the communes and their spirit of liberty, which spurred them on to free themselves from the oppressions of the nobles

¹ [That, of course, which the author is here commenting upon.]

² Quoted in Bartoli, *Stor. d. lett. ital.* vol. vi. part ii. Appendix.

and afterwards led them to subject the feudal lords and wrest their possessions from them. The second was the observance by many of the nobles of the Lombard law, which acknowledged no primogeniture, and compelled them to divide their property equally among all the male members of the family ; in consequence of the observance of this, a great domain was soon cut up into small estates, especially where, as was the case among the Malaspina, there were many male descendants. There were other causes, which, though perhaps not less important, were not general, but incident to the circumstances peculiar to each family.

The first evidence that we have in the case of the Malaspina of the growth of the power of the communes is in 1141, when Obizzo il Grande, the member of the family who was perhaps the most imbued with a warlike spirit, and who would not easily have submitted to such a thing, was obliged to swear fidelity to Piacenza for the places of Compiano and Filline, and later on to make compensation to an abbot of Cluny.¹ In 1188 his son Moroello made peace with the same town, with which he had been at war for a year, and was compelled to sell to Piacenza all the rights that the Malaspina had in the Val di Taro and the Val d' Ena. Up to this time their dominions had extended continuously to the Apennines of the Tortonese ; but

¹ [See above, p. 75.]

the loss of the Val di Taro divided their estates, and cut off their possessions in Lunigiana from those in Lombardy, while by its acquisition the power of Piacenza was greatly increased. After this we find them oppressed by the Genoese and the Florentines, who always aspired to acquire lands in Lunigiana, and seized every opportunity to diminish the power of the Malaspina, if in no other way than by inducing them to form an alliance with them, in order to have their support in time of war.

Later on, as though to continue the work begun by the cities, the Malaspina were oppressed by the Medici, by the Dukes of Milan — who, after the institution of the dukedom in 1395, claimed that the investitures of their fiefs in Lombardy were no longer conferred by the empire, but by the dukes themselves, — and later still by the Spaniards. Their great possessions in Sardinia they lost apparently through their own want of loyalty, for when in 1323 James of Aragon became lord of that kingdom, Azzone, Marchese di Tresana,¹ swore fealty to him, but rebelled at least five times, in concert with the Genoese and Pisana, and was finally driven out in 1354.

The observance of the Lombard law was a factor hardly less potent in dispossessing the Malaspina of their lands. They seem to have been

¹ And of Lusuolo.

unusually prolific; every generation contained a large number of males, all of whom had equal shares of the estates of their father, in consequence of which large domains were soon broken up into small fragments. This not only greatly weakened the power of the house, but the divisions of property gave rise to constant family quarrels, and the later history of the race is filled with records of the blackest crimes. Indeed, had Dante lived a century or two later he would not have been able to accord them such generous praise.¹ He could not then have said that the Malaspina

. . . "sole go right and scorn the evil way,"²

for many dark deeds were committed by them. The weaker members were robbed of their patrimony by the stronger, sometimes without any greater violence than the thrusting of an inconvenient relative into a monastery, there to spend the remainder of his days; but not infrequently with the shedding of blood. One brother would mur-

¹ He might have made a direct application to them of the following words of the *Convito* (trat. iv. cap. xiii. Miss Hillard's translation): —

"And what hatred is that which all bear to the possessor of riches, either from envy or from the desire to seize his possessions! Truly it is so great that, often contrary to proper filial piety, the son has desired the death of his father; and of this the Italians can have the strongest and most evident proof, both beside the Po and beside the Tiber."

² *Purg.* viii. 132.

der another, or several would plot against the life of their father, to say nothing of violence against more remote relatives. In addition to all this, the vassals, who suffered much from the family quarrels, but more from the fact that the Malaspina were not willing to live modestly, although in moderate circumstances, frequently rebelled, and sometimes sought the protection of the cities, which aided them or not according as it was to their own advantage.

Among the minor causes for their decline in power, peculiar to the Malaspina family, the extraordinary number of males has already been sufficiently dwelt upon. It may also be a question whether the frequent intermarriages that are to be found running through the various generations of the family may not have been an important factor in weakening the mental calibre of the race, and emphasizing traits which it would have been well to eradicate. But the two most important of the lesser causes were : first, the reversion of their feudal possessions to the empire, for they became imperial vassals in Barbarossa's time and were not freed from their obligations to the emperors until the suppression of the empire in 1806, when it was too late ; and, second, the preference for rustic indolence, which induced them to retire from active participation in the affairs of their times to their castles in Lunigiana, where they lost power, en-

ergy, and splendor, and do not seem to have obtained the quiet for which they sought. As Litta well remarks: "The condition of great lords in society is artificial. Quiet is for them pure loss. If they wish to preserve their greatness, they must throw themselves into all events. Even some tragic misfortune is of little importance, for misfortunes give a celebrity which is not always entirely harmful. It is bad to be excommunicated or put to death; but it is worse to be pitied or forgotten." This is exactly what happened to the Malaspina. Sometimes in their troubles with the cities they sought the aid of the emperor, but he paid little attention to their woes, for they no longer took part in the affairs of state.

As early as 1294 the Malaspina seem to have realized that some measures were necessary to preserve the power of the family. In this year Corrado il Giovine,¹ whom Dante met in Purgatory (Canto viii.), a man renowned for great courtesy and kindness, and everywhere highly honored, made a will in which he left all his property to his relatives, and recommended them to preserve union and concord. In 1296 his brother Obizzino made an agreement with Franceschino, Marchese di Mu-

¹ It is this Corrado Malaspina and his daughter, the beautiful Spina, about whom Boccaccio writes in the *Decamerone* (the sixth story of the second day). The foundation of the story is historic, though embellished by Boccaccio with imaginary episodes.

lazzo, and Moroello III., Marchese di Giovagallo, that the property of the Malaspina could not be sold out of the family, and that in case of the death of one of their family without sons, the property should be equally divided among their other male descendants. But it does not seem that this agreement ever went into effect. As early as 1555, too, we find one of the Mulazzo branch, Bonifacio, Marchese di Madrignano, establishing the law of primogeniture in his estates; but this also does not seem to have gone into effect until very much later. Even then it served only to extinguish several of the branches of the family, whose affairs went gradually from bad to worse. To-day a few members of the Malaspina family remain in Lunigiana, where they possess lands in freehold; some are scattered through various cities in Italy, but so much reduced in wealth and numbers that they are rarely heard of.

In conclusion I cannot resist the temptation to say a few words in regard to Alessandro, one of the last of the Mulazzo branch,¹ who was a remarkable man, though hardly more so than his eldest brother, Azzo Giacinto. His father, Carlo Moroello, the first of his branch for many years to leave the mountains of Lunigiana, went to Sicily,

¹ His brother Luigi Tommaso was the last of the Marchesi Malaspina of the Mulazzo branch. He died at Pontremoli in 1817.

where he lived for a long time in great splendor. The relations which his uncle, Fogliani, Viceroy of Sicily, had with the court of Madrid opened for his son Alessandro the way to a brilliant career in Spain, where in 1775 he entered the navy. It was not long before his great talents, his extended knowledge of the exact sciences, the great beauty of his person, and his illustrious name, procured him the esteem and good will of the court and the ministry. In 1786 it was determined to fit out several ships of war for a scientific expedition, and Alessandro was appointed to its command. The expedition set sail from Cadiz on the 30th of July, 1789, for the coast of North America, which was the object of its first investigations. In 1792 Alessandro visited the Philippine Islands and the coast of China. He afterwards sailed to New Guinea, touched at New Zealand, New Holland, and landed at the Babuyan Islands, which never before had been visited. In 1793 he was at Lima, and after exploring Tierra del Fuego and the coast of Patagonia, set sail for Cadiz, where he arrived September 24, 1794. His return was celebrated with great festivities, and he became the hero of the hour. The sciences of botany, lithology, and hydrography were greatly enriched by the expedition, and many facts were gathered about unknown peoples. In visiting so many tribes Malaspina suffered not one injury to be done them, as he

was a humane man and travelled to spread civilization among savage peoples and to collect knowledge. In the many difficulties in which he was placed he was always prudent, and in consequence was well received and well treated.

The great services Alessandro had rendered seem to have been soon forgotten, however, for not very long after his return he fell victim to a court intrigue and was imprisoned, ostensibly because certain things were found among his notes of his voyages which convicted him of heresy. He was also accused, and with truth, of holding the new opinions which were circulated abroad at that time by the French Republic, and of being a member of the Free Masons. He languished in the Castle of Corogna for several years. When the Italian Republic was instituted in 1802, Count Melzi was made Vice President, under Napoleon. Melzi, whose mother was a Spaniard, had known Alessandro intimately at Madrid, and shared his political opinions. One of his first acts was to procure Malaspina's release, through the mediation of Napoleon. Alessandro then went to Milan; although Melzi offered him the portfolio of Minister of War to the Italian Republic, he preferred to retire to his estates in Lunigiana, where he died at Pontremoli in 1809.

LETTER IV.

THE Florentine undeservedly banished to the exile of Pistoia,¹ prosperity throughout the duration of many years and the ardor of perennial esteem.

1. THE ardor of your affection burst out in an expression of the greatest confidence in me, in that you have consulted me, my dearest friend, as to whether the soul can pass from passion to passion: — from passion to passion, I say, with the same strength and with objects diverse in number but not in kind. And although this decision ought with greater justice to have proceeded from your lips, you nevertheless wish to make me the author of it, that by the clearing up of a matter of exceeding grave doubt² you might increase the renown of my name. But however agreeable, however acceptable, however grateful, this may be to me, without vexatious allowances my words would have no worth; therefore when you have examined this cause of my silence, you yourself will measure what I leave unexpressed.

¹ Cino da Pistoia, jurisconsult and poet, whom Dante was accustomed to call his second friend.

² Cf. Aristotle, *De generatione et corruptione*, ii. 45.

2. Behold ! the words of the muse ¹ are given below, wherein she sings in aphorism (although it may be expressed briefly,² as is the manner of verse), that intense love of one object can lan-

¹ There is some doubt in regard to the meaning of the "*sermo Calliopeus*" of the original. (See note *g* to the letter in Torri's edition.) Witte, whose opinion is shared by the majority, believes that the words mean simply a loftier kind of song. "For," he says, "it seems most certain that in this place Dante referred to one or the other of his *canzoni* — that perchance which begins *Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete* — which accompanied the letter." Professor Ciampi, on the other hand, believes that "*sermo Calliopeus*" might mean not only a loftier kind of poem, but a poem written with a *figurative or allegorical meaning*. He thinks that the words refer to the Scriptural quotation at the end of the letter, which are to be interpreted allegorically, and which he explains thus: "*Si de mundo fuissetis, mundus quod suum erat diligeret*. If you, O Messer Cino, had belonged to the world, — that is to say, if you had nourished the same passions and affections as those who follow the perverse party (the Guelphs), — the world (the Guelphs) would have loved you as one of its own, nor would you and I have been persecuted." This is a most fantastic interpretation. As Torri says, Dante himself has given us the key to the meaning of the words "*sermo Calliopeus inferius*" in the letter to Moroello Malaspina, where he uses almost the same phrase in alluding to the *canzone* which accompanied it.

² Fraticelli (*Opere minori di Dante*, vol. iii. p. 435) translates *transumptive* by the word *figuratamente*, or *metaphorical*, but it seems rather to mean *briefly*. Giuliani says (*Le opere latine di Dante*, ii. 103), "*Transumptivus*, low Latin, is equivalent to *abbreviatio*; and 'to speak *transumptive* or *per quandam transumptionem*,' means, according to old glossaries, the same as 'to speak coincisely, as in a compendium.'" This would certainly coincide with Dante's ideas of poetry, for of all poets he knew how to express much with few words.

guish and at length die,¹ and also that the death of one love may be the birth of another in the soul.²

3. And although the proof of this is given by experience, it can be reinforced by reason and authority; for every faculty that is not destroyed on the cessation of one act is naturally reserved for another. Therefore the faculties of sense are not destroyed on the cessation of their act while the organ remains, but are naturally reserved for another. Since then, the faculty of concupiscence, which is the seat of love, is a faculty of sense, it is manifest that after the cessation of one passion by which it has been brought into action, it is reserved for another. The major and minor propositions of the syllogism, whose entrance is freely accessible, are left to your diligence to prove.

4. By all means examine carefully the testimony of Ovid in the fourth of the "Metamorphoses," which treats the proposition directly and literally, where the author, telling the story of the three sisters³ who held the divinity⁴ of the son of Semele in contempt, in apostrophizing the Sun (who, after he had deserted and neglected the other nymphs who had previously kindled his desires, was finally

¹ Cf. *Convito*, ii. 9.

² Cf. Aristotle, *De generatione et corruptione*, i. 17.

³ Alcithoe, Arsippe, Leucippe.

⁴ Cf. Ovid, *Metam.* iii. 611.

loving Leucothea) says: "What now, O son of Hyperion," and what follows.¹

5. Under this that relates to the faculties I entreat thee, dearest brother, to exercise patience against the darts of Nemesis.² Read, I pray thee, the remedies for fortuitous circumstances that are provided us as by a father to his sons by that most famous of philosophers, Seneca;³ and of a truth, let not this slip from thy memory: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own."⁴

¹ *Metam.* iv. 192.

² *Metam.* iii. 406.

³ See the Sixteenth Letter to Lucilius: "This (philosophy) will exhort us to obey God with a willing mind; and more strenuously to resist the power of Fortune; this will teach you to trust in Providence and humbly submit to casualties." (Morrell's translation.)

⁴ St. John xv. 19.

LETTER V.

FOR all and for each of the kings of Italy, for the senators of the fair city, and also for the dukes, marquises, and counts, and for the peoples, the humble Italian Dante Alighieri, a Florentine and undeservedly an exile, prays for peace.

1. BEHOLD, now is the acceptable time, in which the signs of consolation and peace arise. For a new day grows bright, revealing a dawn that already lessens the gloom of long calamity. Already the eastern breezes grow stronger; the lips of heaven grow ruddy and strengthen the auguries of the people with a caressing tranquillity. And even we, who for so long have passed our nights in the desert, shall behold the gladness for which we have longed, for Titan shall arise pacific, and justice, which had languished without sunshine at the end of the winter's solstice,¹ shall grow green once

¹ There is some difficulty in regard to the translation of the phrase, "*quasi ad heliotropium hebetata*." Both Torri (*Epistole di Dante*, p. 29, and Fraticelli (*Opere minori di Dante*, vol. iii. p. 441) translate *heliotropium* as the plant, heliotrope, *fior d' eliotropio*; but Witte (*Torris Ausgabe von Dantes Briefen*, in *Dante - Forschungen*, vol. i. p. 496) takes exception to this. He believes that the old version, which was probably that of Marsilio Ficino, and which translated *heliotropium* as meaning the winter solstice — *la quale era senza luce al termine della retrogradazione impigrata*

more, when first he darts forth his splendor. All who hunger and thirst will be satisfied in the light of his rays, and they who delight in iniquity shall be put to confusion at the sight of his radiance. For the strong lion of the Tribe of Judah has hearkened with compassionate ears, and pitying the lament of universal captivity has raised up another Moses, who will liberate his people from the oppression of the Egyptians, and will lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

2. Henceforth let thy heart be joyful, O Italy! who deserveth to be pitied even by the Saracens, but who straightway shalt be looked on with envy throughout the world, because thy bridegroom, the

—to be the correct one, and he adds that the plant *heliotrope* was hardly known in Dante's time. Marsilio Ficino's version seems much the more natural, although no instance of *heliotropium* or *ἡλιοτρόπιον* used for the winter solstice can be found. Such a use of the word by Dante would have been so strange to his readers as to make the phrase obscure to them. He may, however, have considered the etymology of the word as so plain as to justify his use of it with a meaning that no other writer had given it. Witte, perhaps, goes too far in asserting that the plant *heliotrope* was hardly known in Dante's time. Dante might have learned of it from Pliny, who says (N. H. ii. 41-42): "One might wonder at this, did we not observe every day, that the plant named *heliotrope* always looks towards the setting sun, and is, at all hours, turned towards him, even when he is obscured by a cloud." (Translation of Bostock and Riley.)

[Mr. Lowell's note: "I think he meant the plant, as the *revirescet* shows. Perhaps instead of *ad heliotropium*, we should read *ac* in its sense of *like*."] .

solace of the earth and the glory of thy people, the most clement Henry, Divine, Augustus, and Cæsar, hastens to the nuptials. Dry thy tears and blot out the traces of sorrow, O most beauteous, for he is at hand who will free thee from the bonds of the impious ; who, smiting the wicked, will destroy them at the edge of the sword, and will hire his vineyard to other husbandmen, who at the time of harvest will yield the fruit of justice.

3. But will he not be merciful to any ? Yea ; as he is Cæsar, and his majesty flows from the font of pity, he will spare all imploring mercy. His judgments abominate all severity, and always in punishing set a bound on this side of moderation, and in rewarding on the other side. Will he therefore applaud the desperate deeds of evil men, and drink to the undertakings of the presumptuous ? Nay ; because he is Augustus. And if Augustus, will he not avenge the wickedness of the backsliders, and pursue them even into Thessaly, — the Thessaly, I say, of the last destruction ?

4. Lay aside, O Lombard race, thy accumulated barbarity ; and if any vestige of the seed of the Trojans and Latins still exists, give it place, lest when the sublime eagle, descending like a thunderbolt, falls from on high, he may see his eaglets cast out, and the nest of his own young occupied by ravens. Up, O race of Scandinavia !¹ See that

¹ The Lombards believed that they were descended from the

thou mayest desire, as eagerly as in thee lies, the presence of him whose coming thou justly dreadest. Let not cupidity, deceiving thee after the manner of the Sirens, seduce thee, deadening the vigilance of reason by I know not what sweetness. "Come before his presence with a confession of submission, and rejoice on the psaltery with a song of repentance,"¹ considering that he who resists authority, resists the ordinance of God, and he who withstands the divine ordinance, opposes a will coequal with omnipotence; and it is hard to kick against the pricks.

5. Ye likewise, who mourn oppressed, lift up your hearts, for your salvation is at hand. Take up the harrow of a good humility, and level the little field of your mind by breaking up the clods of parched animosity, lest perchance the heavenly rain, coming before the sowing of your seed, fall from on high in vain; or lest the Grace of God shrink from you as the dew does daily from the stone. But do ye conceive like a fertile valley and put forth green, — the green, I say, fruitful of true peace; and, in very truth, in this verdure, making spring in your land, will the new husbandman of the Romans yoke the oxen of his counsel

Scandinavians. See Paul Diacon., *De Gestis Longobard.* ii. 1, Muratori, *Script.* ii. 408. (Fratricelli.)

¹ Psalm xcv. 2. "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms."

more kindly and confidently to the plough. Pardon, pardon, now and henceforth, O best beloved ! who have suffered injustice along with me, that the Hectorian shepherd may recognize you as the sheep of his fold : who, although he holds the rod of temporal correction in his hand by divine concession, nevertheless, that he may be redolent of the goodness of Him from whom as from one point the power of Peter and of Cæsar divides, gladly corrects his family, but more willingly, in very truth, has compassion on it.

6. Therefore, if the old transgression, which many a time like the serpent is coiled and turned on itself, is no hindrance, henceforth can ye all perceive that peace is prepared for one and all, and already can ye taste the first fruits of the hoped-for gladness. Then be ye all vigilant, and rise up to meet your king, O inhabitants of Italy ! reserving yourselves not only for his empire but, as free people, for his guidance.

7. I exhort you not only to rise up to meet him, but also to do reverence to his presence. Ye who drink of his streams and navigate his seas ; ye who tread the sands of the shores and the summits of the alps that are his ; ye who rejoice in any public thing whatsoever, and possess private goods not otherwise than by the bonds of his law : do not, as if ignorant, deceive yourselves as though ye dreamt in your hearts and said : " We have no lord."

For his garden and lake is whatever the heavens encompass round about, since "The sea is God's and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land."¹ Wherefore that God predestined the Roman Prince shines forth in wonderful effects ; and that He afterwards confirmed him by the word of His Word, the Church proclaims.

8. Surely, if through those things which have been created by God the human creature sees the invisible things² with the eyes of the intellect, and if from the things better known those less known are evident to us, in like manner it concerns human apprehension that from the motion of the heavens we should know the Motor and His will ; and this predestination will be seen readily even by those who look superficially. For if from the first spark of this fire we turn back to things passed,³ from what time, I say, hospitality was denied the Argives by the Phrygians ;⁴ and if there is time to survey the affairs of the world even to the triumphs of Octavian, we shall see that some of them have

¹ Psalm xcv. 5 : "The sea is his, and he made it ; and his hands formed the dry land."

² Romans i. 20 : "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."

³ "If I should go on retracing my story from its first beginning, and there were time to listen to the annals of our struggles." Virg. *Æn.* i. 372, 373 (Clayton).

⁴ On account of the rape of Helen by Paris. (Fratlicelli.)

completely transcended the heights of human valor, and that God has worked somewhat through men, just as through the medium of the new heavens. For we do not always act; nay, rather are we sometimes the instruments of God; and the human will, in which liberty is innate, acts sometimes free even from earthly passions, and, subservient to the Eternal Will, often serves It without knowing it.

9. And if these things which are first principles, as it were, for proving that which is sought, are not sufficient, who, proceeding from the conclusion inferred through such facts will not be compelled to think as I do, perceiving that peace has embraced the world completely for twelve years, — a peace which revealed in its accomplishment the face of its syllogizer, the Son of God. And while He, made man, preached the Gospel on earth for the revelation of the Holy Ghost, as if He were dividing two kingdoms, distributing all things to himself and Cæsar, He commanded to “Render to each the things that are his.”

10. But if the obstinate mind demands further, not yet assenting to the truth, let him examine the words of Christ, even when in chains, for He who is our light, when Pilate opposed His power, asserted that the office which he, as lieutenant of Cæsar, was vaunting of, came from on high. Therefore walk ye not even as the Gentiles, involved in darkness by the vanity of the senses; but

open the eyes of your mind, and see, for the Lord of heaven and earth has ordained a king for us. This is he whom Peter, the vicar of God, admonishes us to honor; whom Clement, now the successor of Peter, illuminates with the light of the apostolic benediction, in order that where the spiritual ray does not suffice, the splendor of the lesser light may illumine.

LETTER VI.

DANTE ALIGHIERI, a Florentine and undeservedly an exile, to those most infamous Florentines within the city.

1. THE compassionate providence of the Eternal King, who, while in His goodness He perpetuates His celestial kingdom, does not in disdain desert our earthly one, decreed that human affairs should be governed by the Holy Empire of the Romans, in order that mankind might repose in the calm of so great a protection, and that it might everywhere be ruled agreeably to law, according to the demands of nature. Although this truth is confirmed by divine word, although antiquity supported by the prop of reason alone affirms this, nevertheless it is in no slight degree commended, in that, when the throne of Augustus is vacant, all the world swerves from the right way. For the helmsman and the rowers in the bark of Peter sleep, and Italy, wretched, alone, abandoned to private rule, and destitute of all public government, is struck by a force of wind and wave so great that words cannot describe it; yea, even the unfortunate Italians can scarcely measure it with their tears. Therefore let the faces of all who with foolhardy

presumption haughtily oppose this most manifest will of God — even though the sword of Him who saith “Vengeance is mine” has not yet fallen from heaven — be overspread with pallor, for already the sentence of the severe Judge hangs over them.

2. But you who transgress laws, human and divine, you whom the awful insatiability of avarice has led to be ready for any crime, does not the terror of the second death harass you, in that ye, first and alone, dreading the yoke of liberty, have raged against the glory of the Roman Prince, the monarch of the earth and the ambassador of God; and using the right of prescription, repudiating the duty of vassalage, have chosen rather to rise up in the madness of rebellion! Are ye ignorant, ye fools and licentious, that public justice will end with the end of time alone, and can be subject to the computation of no prescription? Surely the articles of the laws most loudly declare, and human reason on examination pronounces, that the public rule of affairs, though neglected ever so long, can never pass away, or, however weakened, be conquered. For what happens for the advantage of all cannot perish or even be weakened without detriment to all. Neither God nor nature wills this; and the general opinion of mankind would hold it altogether in abhorrence. Why, then, such a foolish supposition being disposed of, do ye, deserting the legitimate government, seek like new Baby-

lonians to found new kingdoms, in order that the Florentine may be one polity and the Roman another? Why may it not please you to envy the apostolic monarchy likewise? that if Delia is to have a twin in heaven, the Delian One may also.¹ If, however, thinking over your evil emprise does not cause you alarm, let this, at least, terrify your hardened hearts: that in punishment for your crime not only wisdom, but the beginning of wisdom, has been taken away from you. For no condition of an offender is more terrible than that of him who shamelessly and without fear of God does whatever he pleases; and, in truth, the evil man is often smitten with this punishment, that he who has been forgetful of God while he lived, in dying is forgetful of himself.

3. But if your insolent arrogance has rendered you, like the summits of Gilboa, so entirely incapable of receiving the heavenly dew that no fear has restrained you from resisting the decrees of the

¹ If there are to be two moons in heaven, there may be two suns likewise. The comparison of the moon to the emperor and the sun to the Pope is used by Dante several times. See *Monarchia*, lib. iii. 4: "For they say, in the first place, following Genesis, that God made two great luminaries, a greater and a less, one to rule over the day and the other the night. They understand this to be said allegorically of the two powers, the spiritual and the temporal. Hence, just as the moon, which is the smaller luminary, has no light unless it receives it from the sun, so the temporal power has no authority unless it receive it from the spiritual."

eternal senate, — nor even yet are ye afraid for that ye did not fear, — can ye free yourselves from that baneful terror, which is, in truth, human and worldly, while the inevitable shipwreck of your most haughty race, and your rapine, worthy of many tears, is hastening on? Do ye because encircled by a ridiculous palisade trust to any defences whatever? O ye concordant for evil! O ye blinded by marvellous avarice! In what will it profit you to have surrounded yourselves with a wall, to have fortified yourselves with ramparts and battlements,¹ when the eagle,² terrible in a field of gold, swoops down on you, — the eagle who, now sailing over the Pyrenees, now over the Caucasus, now over Atlas, the more strengthened by the opposition of the host of heaven, of old looked down upon the vast seas as no hindrance to his flight? How will ye stand amazed, O most wretched among men, in the presence of the conqueror of raving Hesperia! In truth, the hope which ye cherish in vain and without reason will receive no advantage

¹ “In the same year, 1310, on Saint Andrew’s Day, the Florentines, fearing the approach of the emperor, gave orders to enclose the city with walls and stockades from the Gate of San Gallo as far as the Gate of Sant’ Ambrogio, and then to the Arno, and from the Gate of San Gallo to where the walls of Prato were already laid. They made them eight *braccia* high, and the work was done rapidly. This was certainly the salvation of the city, for it was all shut off and the old walls were in great part torn down.” (Villani, *Cronica*, ix. 10.)

² Cf. *Par.* vi., where Justinian discourses of the Roman eagle.

from your resistance ; but by this obstacle will the advent of the just king be inflamed the more, and compassion, always an attendant on his army, will fly away in anger ; and where ye think to defend the robe of a false liberty, there will ye fall into the bonds of a true slavery. For it must be believed that it is sometimes brought to pass by the wonderful judgment of God, that where the ungodly thinks to shun a merited punishment, there is he precipitated into it the more deeply ; and he who has resisted the divine will knowingly and willingly, serves it unknowingly and unwillingly.

4. With sorrow will ye see your edifices, which were not constructed prudently as your needs were, but foolishly turned into places of pleasure, which Pergamean walls, again renewed, do not surround, hurled down by the battering-ram and consumed by fire. Ye will see the enraged populace on every side, now struggling in opposite factions for and against you, now opposed to you in the same faction, clamoring horribly, since it does not know how to withstand hunger and fear at the same time. Not less will it grieve you to see the temples despoiled, which are daily frequented by a concourse of women, and to see the young, wondering and unknowing, destined to expiate the sins of their fathers. And if my prophetic spirit is not deceived — which, instructed by veracious signs as well as by invincible arguments foretells, — when by far your

greatest number has been completely undone by death or captivity, with tears will ye, the few remaining to suffer exile, see the city, consumed by long anguish, finally delivered into the hands of aliens. And to conclude in brief: those misfortunes that Saguntum, that city glorious in faithfulness, endured for liberty, ye in your perfidy will be obliged to undergo ignominiously for the sake of slavery.

5. Nor may ye take courage from the unexpected good fortunes of the inhabitants of Parma, who, impelled by ill-advising hunger, and murmuring one to the other, "Let us rather rush headlong into the midst of battle and die,"¹ made a sally into the camp of Cæsar while Cæsar was absent; for even these, though indeed they won a victory from Victoria,² nevertheless memorably gained a grief from the

¹ "Moriāmur, et in media arma ruāmus."

Virgil, *Æneid*, ii. 353.

² Longfellow says that Dante is as fond of a play on words as Shakespeare. The play on words here — won a victory from Victoria — has reference to the siege of Parma by Frederick II. in 1248. Frederick, in order to besiege the town more closely, built a fortress to face it, like another town with moats and battlements, and to this he gave the name of Victoria. After several months had passed, the Parmesans, reduced to desperation by hunger and profiting by the emperor's absence at the hunt, made a sally, captured and destroyed the fortress, and not only killed many of those who had been left to defend it, but also succeeded in taking much treasure, among which was the crown of the said emperor. See Villani, *Cronica*, vi. 34.

grievous deed. But do ye call to mind the thunderbolts of the first Frederick ; think on Milan and likewise on Spoleto ;¹ for, shaken by the thought of their almost simultaneous perversion and subversion, your too inflamed bowels will become chilled, and your too fervent hearts will contract with fear. O ye most vainglorious of Tuscans, insensate by nature as well as by corruption ! In your ignorance do you neither consider nor imagine in what a nocturnal gloom the footsteps of your foolish mind wander in the sight of those already fledged.² For the fledged and immaculate³ along the road see you standing, as it were, on the threshold of a prison and repelling any one commiserating you, lest perchance he should free you from captivity, and

¹ See Villani, v. i. "The aforesaid Frederick, passing through Lombardy on his expedition into France against King Louis, who held Pope Alexander, finding that the city of Milan had rebelled against him, besieged it, and after a long siege took it in the year of our Lord 1157, in the month of March, and had the walls thrown down, the whole city burned, and the ground ploughed and sowed with salt." In regard to Spoleto Villani says in the same passage : "When Spoleto, belonging to the party of the Church, refused to obey him, he took the field, captured it, and destroyed it utterly."

² "The callow birdlet waits for two or three,
But to the eyes of those already fledged,
In vain the net is spread or shaft is shot."

Purg. xxxi. 61-63.

Prov. i. 17: "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (Vulgate: *ante oculos pennatorum*).

³ "Wise and upright men." (Fratlicelli.)

strike off the shackles with which your hands and feet are bound. Neither, because ye are blind, do ye perceive the avarice that dominates you, flattering you with its venomous whisper, restraining you with its vain threats, imprisoning you within the law of sin,¹ and, moreover, forbidding you to obey the most sacred laws, which counterfeit the image of natural justice; the observance of which laws, if it is glad, if it is free, is not only proved not to be servitude, nay, rather, to him who observes closely it is manifest that it is the highest liberty itself. For what is this liberty but the unhindered progress from will to act that the laws provide for such as are not rebellious? Therefore, since they alone are free who voluntarily obey the law, what think ye that ye are, who, while ye simulate a love of liberty, contrary to all laws conspire against the prince of laws?

6. O most wretched descendants of the Fiesolans!² O Punic barbarity once more renewed! Do these foretastes inspire you with a little fear? Indeed, I believe ye tremble while awake, although ye feign hope in your mien and in your lying speech, and in your dreams ye awake many a time,

¹ Romans vii. 23: "Bringing me into captivity to the law of sin."

² "But that ungrateful and malignant people,
Which of old time from Fesole descended,
And smacks still of the mountain and the granite."

Inf. xv. 61-63.

either in dread of the presages ye have had or to revolve the counsels of the day. But if while trembling with good reason, ye repent without sorrow your having acted with madness, in order that the streams of fear and grief may unite in the bitterness of repentance, these facts now remain to be impressed on your minds: that this standard-bearer of the Roman Empire, the divine and triumphant Henry, thirsting not for his private advantage, but for the public good of the world, undertook each arduous emprise for us, partaking our hardships of his own free will, so that to him after Christ, the prophet Isaiah pointed the finger of prophesy, when by the revelation of the Holy Ghost he foretold: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."¹ Therefore, if ye do not wish to dissemble, ye will see that the time is now at hand most bitterly to repent your foolhardy presumption. But a late repentance will not be productive of forgiveness from henceforth; nay, rather the commencement of a seasonable punishment. For it is true that the sinner is smitten that he may be converted without backsliding.

Written on the thirty-first of March, on the confines of Tuscany, near the springs of the Arno, in the first year of the most auspicious passage of the Emperor Henry into Italy.

¹ Isaiah liii. 4.

LETTER VII.¹

THE feet of the most holy conqueror and excellent master, Lord Henry, by divine providence King of the Romans, always august, are kissed ² by his most devoted servant Dante Alighieri, a Florentine and undeservedly an exile, and all Tuscans everywhere, who desire the public peace.

1. BEARING witness to the boundless love of God, peace ³ was left to us as a heritage, that in its wonderful sweetness the hardships of our warfare might be assuaged, and that in its practice we might merit the joys of the triumphant Kingdom of Heaven. But the malignity of the ancient and implacable foe, which is forever privily lying

¹ This is the second of the letters to which Villani refers (*Cronica*, ix. 136): —

“He wrote amongst other things three noble epistles: one he sent to the Florentine Government, complaining of his undeserved exile; another to the Emperor Henry when he was at the siege of Brescia, reprehending him for his delay, and almost prophesying; the third to the Italian cardinals during the vacancy after the death of Pope Clement, urging them to agree in electing an Italian Pope.”

² In regard to the custom of kissing the feet of emperors, see Mussato, *De reb. gestis Henr. VII.*, iii. 8, in Muratori, *Script. Rer. It.* x. 376. (Fraticelli.)

³ St. John xiv. 27: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”

in wait for human prosperity, after dispossessing those who freely consented, has impiously despoiled us against our will, through the absence of our protector. Hence long have we wept by the streams of confusion, and we have implored without ceasing the protection of the Just King, that he would overthrow the satellites ¹ of the savage tyrant and reëstablish us in our rights. And when you, successor of Cæsar and Augustus, crossing the summits of the Apennines, brought back the venerated Tarpeian ensign, forthwith our deep sighs ceased, and the floods of tears subsided; and, rising like the sun ² that is eagerly longed for, a new hope of a better age shone upon Latium. Then many, anticipating the accomplishment of their prayers, in their rejoicing sang with Virgil of the reign of Saturn and of the return of the Virgin.³

2. But because our sun (whether the fervor of

¹ "I think this might be applied to more than one prince of the French house: especially, however, to King Robert, whom the Florentines made duke in his father's lifetime (Villani, viii. 82), and than whom Henry, though they had long pretended to be friends, had no more bitter enemy. (*Nicol. Episc. Botr.* p. 1151; Dino Compagni, iii. 36; Villani, ix. 8, 31, 39, 50.) The reference can, however, be better applied to Guelphism in general." (Witte's note in Torri, *Epistole di Dante*, p. 52.)

² Cf. *Inf.* i. 17: —

"I beheld its shoulders,
Vested already with that planet's rays."

³ "Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna." (Virgil, *Eclogue* iv. 6.)

desire or the semblance of truth suggests this) is now believed to tarry, or is supposed to have turned back in his course, as if Joshua ¹ or the son of Amoz ² commanded him anew, we are compelled by uncertainty to doubt, and to break forth in the words of the precursor, thus: "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" ³ And although the long thirst in its violence casts doubt, as is its wont, on those things which are certain on account of their nearness, none the less we trust and hope in you, protesting that you are the ambassador of God, the son of the church, and the promoter of Roman glory. For, in truth, I, who write as much for myself as for others, saw you most gracious, as beseems imperial majesty, and heard you most clement, when my hands touched your feet and my lips paid their debt.⁴ Then my spirit gloried in you, and silently I said within myself: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" ⁵

3. But we marvel what sluggishness delays you

¹ Joshua x. 13.

² Isaiah xxxvii. ; 2 Kings xix.

³ St. Luke vii. 19.

⁴ It seems certain from these words that Dante was present in Milan when Henry VII. was crowned with the iron crown, on the day of Epiphany, 1311; and "when," says Villani (*Cronica*, ix. 9), "ambassadors were present from almost all the cities of Italy, except Florence and its league."

⁵ St. John i. 29.

so long, since, now for some time a victor in the valley of the Po, you forsake, overlook, and neglect Tuscany, as though you believed the rights of the empire to be protected by you were circumscribed by the boundaries of Liguria; not fully understanding, as it seems to us, that the power of the Romans is limited neither by the confines of Italy, nor by the shores of three-horned Europe.¹ For although through violence its dominions may have been narrowed on all sides, none the less, since it extends to the waves of Amphitrite by inviolable right, it barely deigns to be girded round about by the ineffectual billows of the ocean. For to us it was written: —

“Of illustrious origin shall Trojan Cæsar be born:

His empire shall end with the ocean; his fame with the stars.”²

And if when Augustus decreed that all the world should be taxed (as our Evangelist,³ allegorically a bull, kindled by the divine flame, bellows) the edict had not gone forth from the court of a most just sovereignty, the only begotten Son of God, made man to declare himself subject to the decree according to his assumed nature, would not have

¹ In calling Europe “three horned” Dante conforms to the description of the old geographers, who gave it almost the form of a triangle, one angle of which was formed by Tanai (the Don), another by Scotland and Ireland, and the third by that part of Spain where Seville is situated. (Fraticeilli.)

² Virgil, *Æneid*, i. 286.

³ St. Luke ii. 1.

been willing to have been born of the Virgin at that time ; for surely He whom it behoved to fulfill all righteousness ¹ would not have counselled an unrighteous deed.²

4. Therefore let it shame him whom all the world awaits, to be ensnared so long in such a narrow corner of the earth, and let it not result from the caution of Augustus that the Tuscan tyranny is strengthened in the confidence of delay, and that day by day, by encouraging the insolence of the wicked, it gathers new force, heaping rashness on rashness. Once more let the voice of Curio to Cæsar thunder forth : —

“ While parties tremble, only weakly united,
Delay not ; a man prepared should never dally.
Labor and fear are both dearly bought.” ³

Let that voice of chiding again thunder from the clouds to Æneas : —

“ If the glory of such a destiny moves thee not,
If for thine own fame thou toilest not,
Think on the young Ascanius, thy heir, thy hope, — Iulus,
To whose kingdom belong Italy and the land of Rome.” ⁴

¹ St. Matthew iii. 15 : “ For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”

² Dante uses the same argument in the *De Monarchia* (ii. 10) : “ But Christ, as his biographer Luke testifies, was of his own will born of his Virgin Mother, under an edict from Roman authorities, that in this special enrollment of the human race he, the Son of God become flesh, might not be omitted.”

³ Lucan, *Pharsal.* i. 280. Cf. *Inf.* xxviii. 98.

⁴ Virgil, *Æneid*, iv. 272–276.

5. For in truth, King John, your royal heir,¹ whom the succeeding generation of the world awaits after the setting of the sun that now is rising, is another Ascanius, who, following in the footsteps of his great father, will rage like a lion against the followers of Turnus wheresoever they are, and towards the Latins will become as gentle as a lamb. Let the lofty counsels of the holiest of kings look to this, that the heavenly judgment may not again sound bitter in these words of Samuel:² “When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee King over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites.” For you also have been consecrated king, that you may smite Amalek and may not spare Agag, and that you may avenge him that sent you, on a brutal people, and for their hasty rejoicing: which, of a truth, Amalek and Agag are said to signify.

6. You waste the spring as well as the winter at Milan; and do you think to slay the baleful hydra by striking off its heads? If you should read the mighty deeds of the glorious Alcides, you would see that you are deceived even as was he, before

¹ John, King of Bohemia, at that time twelve years of age. (Fraticeilli.)

² 1 Sam. xv. 17, 18.

whom the venomous animal grew with each loss, his head sprouting forth anew into many, until he of the great heart vigorously attacked the seat of life. Not even for killing trees is the lopping of their branches sufficient; nay, so long as their roots are sound that they may yield nourishment, their branches will multiply more lustily than ever. What will you, the sole ruler of the world, proclaim that you have accomplished, when you have bowed the head of refractory Cremona? Will not the madness of Brescia¹ or Pavia be then suddenly inflamed? Aye, in truth. And anon, when again the scourge shall cease to be plied, it will soon arise at Vercelli, at Bergamo, or elsewhere, until the radical cause of this abundant growth is removed, and, the root of so great a frenzy being torn out, trunk and thorny branches dry up together.

7. Do you not know, perchance, O most excellent of princes! (nor can you see from the height of such majesty) where this stinking fox lies, safe from the hunters? Forsooth the caitiff drinks neither in the waters of the precipitous Po, nor in those of your Tiber, but the streams of the Arno thus poison his lips, and Florence (do you perchance know it not?) is this dire evil called. This is the viper that darts at the bowels of its

¹ Villani was evidently mistaken when he said that Dante wrote this letter while Henry was at the siege of Brescia. (Fraticelli.)

mother; this is the sick sheep that contaminates the flock of its master by contact; this is the accursed and impious Myrrha,¹ who becomes inflamed with passion in the embraces of her father, Cinyras; this is that impetuous Amata,² who, when the fated nuptials were denied, was not afraid to take to herself a son-in-law whom the fates forbade, incited him to carry on the war fiercely, and at length, paying the penalty of her wicked temerity, hanged herself in a halter. In very truth, she strives to rend her mother into pieces with the ferocity of a viper, when against Rome, who fashioned her after her own pattern and likeness,³ she sharpens the horns of rebellion. In very truth from her evaporating corruption she exhales an infectious smoke, and thence the neighboring flocks all unconscious waste away, while she attaches the

¹ " . . . That is the ancient ghost
Of the nefarious Myrrha, who became
Beyond all rightful love her father's lover."

Inf. xxx. 37-39.

² Amata was the wife of King Latinus and mother of Lavinia. She hung herself in rage because she believed that Turnus had been slain by Æneas, who was to marry Lavinia in his place. Cf. *Purg. xvii.* 35-37: —

" O Queen,
Why hast thou wished in anger to be naught?
Thou'st slain thyself, Lavinia not to lose;
Now hast thou lost me."

³ See *Convito*, i. 3: "For it pleased the citizens of the fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome — Florence — to cast me out of her most sweet bosom," etc.

neighbors to herself by seducing them with lies and flatteries, and infatuates the allies. In very truth she glows with lust for the incestuous embraces of her father, when she endeavors with shameless effrontery to violate against you the agreement of the Supreme Pontiff, father of fathers. In very truth she resists the commandments of God ; while worshipping the idol of her own will, and spurning the legitimate king, she is not ashamed, mad that she is in her power of doing evil, to barter rights that are not hers with a king not hers.¹ And thus the infuriate woman awaits the halter with which she is to bind her neck ; for often one is betrayed into evil passions, that so betrayed he may do those things that are not seemly. And although these deeds may be unjust, nevertheless the punishments that follow are recognized to be just.

8. Up then, thou noble child of Jesse, take unto thyself courage from the eyes of the Lord God of Sabaoth, in whose presence thou art to act ; and overthrow this Goliath with the sling of thy wisdom and with the stone of thy strength, for at his fall night and the shadow of fear will cover the camp of the Philistines, the Philistines will flee, and Israel will be set at liberty.² Then our heritage, deprived of which we weep without ceasing, will be restored to us in its entirety. And as now,

¹ King Robert of Naples. See Villani, *Cronica*, ix. 56.

² 1 Samuel xvii.

while exiles in Babylon we lament in remembering holy Jerusalem, so then, as citizens, and breathing in peace, with gladness shall we call to mind the miseries of turmoil.

Written in Tuscany, near the springs of the Arno, on the sixteenth of April, 1311, the first year of the descent into Italy of the divine and most fortunate Henry.

LETTER VIII.

To the Magnificent, Messer Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna.

I SHOULD have expected to see anything but what I have actually seen and discovered of the quality of this magnificent State. "Presence lessens glory,"¹ if I may make use of that passage of Virgil. I had imagined to myself that I should find here those noble, magnanimous Catos and those rigid censors of depraved customs,—in short, all that they, assuming a most pompous manner, would have unhappy and afflicted Italy believe that they represent in themselves. Do they not cause themselves to be called "lords of all, a togated race?"² A miserable and misguided people art thou truly, so insolently oppressed, so

¹ This quotation is not from Virgil, — but from Claudian, *De bello gildonico*, v. 385: —

"Vindictam mandasse eat est ; plus nominis horror,
Quam tuus ensis aget, *minuit praesentia famam.* "

Dante would hardly have made the mistake of attributing to Virgil a passage which did not belong to him. I know of no other instance of his quoting Claudian.

² Virgil, *Aeneid*, i. 282: "Rerum dominos, gentemque togatam."

vilely governed, and so cruelly vexed by these upstarts, destroyers of the ancient laws, and authors of most wicked corruptions. But what shall I tell you, my Lord, of the obtuse and brutal ignorance of such grave and venerable fathers? ¹ On entering the presence of such a mature and white-haired college, I wished, in order not to abuse both your greatness and my authority, to perform my office and your embassy in that tongue which with the empire of beautiful Ausonia has continually gone on declining and always will decline; believing, perchance, to find it seated in its majesty in this most distant corner, hereafter to be spread with the power of this state through the length and breadth of Europe at least. But alas, I could not have been a more strange and unknown pilgrim had I but just come from extreme and western Thule.² Nay, I could have found here interpreters for my strange idiom far more readily had I come from the fabulous Antipodes than when I was hearkened to with the eloquence of Rome on my lips; for I had no sooner pronounced the part of

¹ "Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors."

Othello, act i. scene 3.

² Cf. Brunetto Latini, *Li Tresors*, book i. part iv. chap. 124: "These and many other lands and islands are beyond Bretaigne and beyond the land of Norway. But the isle of Thule is the farthest, which is so deeply set toward the north that in summer, when the sun enters the sign of Cancer, the night is so short that it seems nothing."

my exordium that I had composed in your name in felicitation on the recent election of this most serene Doge, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart,"¹ than one was sent to tell me that I should either seek out some interpreter or change my mode of speech. Thus between astonishment and scorn, I know not which the more, I began to say a few words in that tongue which I have used from what time I was in swaddling-clothes, which was but little more familiar and natural to them than the Latin had been. Therefore, instead of carrying them joy and delight, I sowed in a field so fertile in ignorance the most abounding seeds of wonder and confusion. But that they do not understand the Italian speech is not at all a matter of wonder, since, descended from Greek and Dalmatian progenitors, they have brought to this delectable land nothing but the worst and most shameful customs, together with the mire of all unbridled lasciviousness. Wherefore it has seemed good to me to give you these short tidings of the embassy that I have executed in your name, praying that, although you have every authority to command me, it may never again please you to send me on a like emprise, from which you can at no time hope for fame nor I for consolation. I will remain here a few days to feast my bodily eyes, which are naturally greedy

¹ Psalm xcvi. 11.

of the novelty and pleasure of this place; and then I will return to my sweetest haven of rest, so graciously embraced by your royal courtesy.

From Venice on the thirtieth of March, 1314.

Your humble servant,

DANTE ALIGHIERI, Florentine.

LETTER IX.

To the Italian Cardinals Dante Alighieri of Florence.

1. "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations!"¹ In times gone by the cupidity of the rulers of the Pharisees, which rendered the ancient priesthood an abomination, not only took away the ministry from the tribe of the Levites, but brought siege and destruction upon the chosen city of David. But when He, who alone is eternal, beheld this from the exalted heights of eternity, He impressed the mind of a prophet worthy of God with His command by the Holy Ghost; and he in the words just quoted and, ah, woe is me! too often repeated, lamented over holy Jerusalem as though she were destroyed.

2. Of a truth, we who profess the same Father and Son, the same God and Man, the same Mother and Virgin; we for whom and for whose salvation it was said, after the question about love had been asked thrice: "Peter, feed the sacred fold;"²

¹ Lamentations i. 1.

² St. John xxi. 17: "Feed my sheep."

we, who mourn with Jeremiah, not for those things that are to come but for the deed itself, are now compelled to lament over Rome as widowed and deserted (over that Rome to which, after the pomp of so many triumphs, Christ by word and deed granted the empire of the world, which in like manner Peter, and Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, consecrated as the Apostolic See by the shedding of their own blood) ; we are grieved, alas ! no less in beholding her thus than in beholding the deplorable wound of heresy itself.

3. The promoters of impiety, Jews,¹ Saracens, and Gentiles, laugh our sabbaths to scorn, and as it appears, cry aloud : “ Where is their God ? ” And perchance they ascribe this misfortune to their snares, and to their power opposed to the guardian angels ; and what is more horrible, certain astrologers and evil prophets assert that, in that ye have misused your freedom of choice, of necessity have ye chosen this.

4. Ye in truth, who are centurions of the first rank² of the church militant, in neglecting to guide the chariot of the Bride of the Crucified along the well-known course, have swerved from the way not otherwise than did Phaeton, the unskilled charioteer ; and ye whose duty it was to give light to the flock following you through the forest of this pilgrimage, have brought it with you to the

¹ *Paradiso* v. 81.

² *Par.* xxiv. 59.

brink of the precipice. Nor do I enumerate examples to be imitated by you,—inasmuch as ye turn your backs and not your faces to the car of the Bride,¹ and with truth can be said to stand with your faces averted from the temple, like those who were shown to the prophet,²—by you who scorn the fire sent from Heaven upon altars which now smoke with the profane fire, by you who sell doves in the temple, where in bartering for those things that are priceless ye have made them venal to your dishonor. But expect the scourge!³ Expect the fire! Despise not the patience of Him who awaits you to repentance. But if ye are in any doubt in regard to the precipice on the brink of which ye stand, what shall I answer if not that ye have agreed with Alcimus and Demetrius?⁴

5. And perchance in your wrath ye will rebuke me, saying: “Who is this, who with no fear of the sudden punishment of Uzzah puts forth his hand to the ark, though it is tottering?”⁵ In truth I am one of the least among the sheep in the flock of Jesus Christ, and surely I abuse no pastoral authority, inasmuch as I have no riches. Therefore not through riches but by the grace of God

¹ Cf. *Purg.* xxx.

² *Ezek.* viii. 16.

³ *St. John* ii. 15. (*Fraticelli*.)

⁴ *1 Macc.* vii. 9; *Josephus, Ant. Jud.* bk. xii. chap. 15.

⁵ *2 Sam.* vi; *Purg.* x. 57. Cf. *Epistolam Nicolai Laurentii ad Cardin. Guidonem Bononiensem*: “Some one will perhaps say

am I what I am, and "zeal of His house hath eaten me up."¹ For already even out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has proceeded the truth pleasing to God; and he that was blind from his birth has confessed the verity in regard to which the Pharisees not only held their peace, but which they even maliciously endeavored to distort. What I dare to say I am fully convinced of by these facts; and in addition to this I have the authority of the Master Philosopher,² who, in treating of all morality, taught that truth is to be preferred beyond any friend whatsoever. Nor will the presumption of Uzzah, which some one might believe could be laid to my charge, as if I spoke rashly, contaminate me with his sin; because he put forth his hand to the ark, I to the oxen who are refractory and draw out of the path in different directions. Let Him come to the assistance of the ark, who opened His eyes to save the laboring ship.³

to me, What has it to do with thee, O least of citizens, in whatever fashion the ark of the Roman Republic is borne by stumbling oxen? Dost thou put a presumptuous hand to steady that which is surely not moved without the permission of a higher will? Dost thou, a single sheep, think to watch over the whole Roman flock with more care than its shepherd?" (Witte's note in Torri, p. 84.)

¹ Psalm lxi. 9.

² Aristotle, *Ethics*, i. 4; Dante, *De Monarchia*, iii. 1: "The philosopher, our preceptor in morals, persuades us that for the sake of truth we should destroy even that which is near and dear to us."

³ St. Luke viii. 24.

6. And thus it seems to me that I have provoked no one to contention, but rather that I have caused the blush of shame (if at least shame has not been entirely quenched) to mount to your cheeks and to those of others, archimandrites throughout the world in name alone, since among so many who usurp the office of Shepherd, among so many sheep which even if not driven off are none the less neglected and untended in the pastures, one voice alone — alone piteous and only a private one — is heard at the obsequies, as it were, of Mother Church.

7. And why not? Every one has taken Cupidity to wife, even as ye have, — Cupidity, who is never, like Charity, the mother of Piety and Equity, but always of Impiety and Iniquity. Ah most holy Mother, Bride of Christ, what sons dost thou bear of water and of the spirit to shame thee! Neither Charity nor Justice, but the daughters of the horse-leech ¹ have become thy daughters-in-law, and all save the Bishop of Luni ² attest what kind of sons

¹ Proverbs xxx. 15.

² Gherardino di Filattiera, a member of the *Spino Fiorito* of the Malaspina family (see genealogical tree, Plate IV.), and Bishop of Luni from 1312 to 1321. The bishops of Luni at that time were powerful temporal lords, but in 1313, when Gherardino refused to render obedience to Henry VII. and to take part in the coronation at Milan, the emperor deprived him of his temporal power. Although Henry died shortly after at Buonconvento, the Ghibellines threw themselves upon the bishopric of

they have brought forth to thee. Thy Gregory¹ lies among the cobwebs; Ambrose lies on the neglected shelves of the clergy; Augustine lies forgotten; Dionysius,² Damascenus,³ and Bede,⁴ have been thrown aside; and I know not what Speculum,⁵ Innocent,⁶ and he of Ostia⁷ preach. Wherefore

Luni to despoil it of its dominions, and Gherardino had to abandon the diocese. The Malaspina themselves were not the last to assail it, caring little for their relationship with the bishop, when they perceived the gain that would accrue to them. Gherardino, being hard pressed, cast his eyes upon a young soldier who had just returned from England and France, where he had made a great name in arms. This was Castruccio Castracani, who was named Viscount of the Bishopric of Luni on July 4th, 1314, by Gherardino; from this must date the beginning of his brilliant career. The bishop, however, did not have great cause to be satisfied with his choice, for although Castruccio succeeded in taking Fosdinovo, and in driving the relations of Gherardino from one part of Lunigiana, the temporal power of the Bishops of Luni was much shaken, and little by little vanished. Gherardino died in 1321, when Castruccio Castracani was Lord of Lucca. See Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*, vol. viii.

¹ Gregory I., the Great. See *Purg.* x. 75.

² Dionysius, the Areopagite.

³ Torri reads "Damianus." See *Par.* xxi. 121.

⁴ The Venerable Bede. See *Par.* x. 131.

⁵ "*Speculum juris* (*lo Speculatore*), a treatise composed late in the thirteenth century by Guglielmo Durante, Bishop of Mende, in Languedoc." (Witte's note in Torri, p. 86.)

⁶ "Innocent III., whose Decretals are by far the most numerous among those of Gregory IX.; unless it is perhaps Sinibaldus Fliscus, who as Pope Innocent IV. edited commentaries on the Decretals concerning the dogma of supreme power." (Witte's note in Torri.)

⁷ "Henricus de Segusia, Cardinal of Ostia, author of commenta-

is this? They sought God as their end and best good; these run after riches and benefices.

8. But, O Fathers, believe me not the phœnix of the universe, for all murmur, or ponder, or dream the things that I say aloud. And wherefore do they not tell of their discoveries? Many are lost in wonder, but will even these always hold their peace and not bear testimony to their Master? The Lord liveth! And He who set the tongue of Balaam's ass in motion, is likewise Lord of the brutes of to-day.¹

9. Already I have become importunate, for ye have driven me to it. May it shame you then to be rebuked or admonished from so lowly a place, and not from Heaven, may it pardon you! In truth shame acts rightly upon us when we are touched on that side, where it may play upon the sense of hearing together with the other senses, and beget in us repentance, its first-born, and where this may engender the resolution to amend.

10. That this resolution may be cherished and protected by a noble perseverance, may ye all fix Rome, that city now deprived of both its luminaries,² now deserving the pity of Hannibal no less on the Decretals and such an excellent abridgment of them that scholars of canonical law are said to 'follow the Ostian.'” (Witte's note in Torri.)

¹ Numbers xxii. 28.

² Henry of Luxemburg died in April, 1313. The empire was contested by Louis of Bavaria and Frederick of Austria; the papal throne was also vacant.

than that of others,¹ sitting solitary and widowed,² as is proclaimed above³—may ye all fix her actually before the eyes of mortals, such as she is according to the model of your ideal. And to you who as little children knew the sacred Tiber are my words chiefly addressed; for although the capital of Latium ought dutifully to be loved by all Italians, as the common source of their civility, with reason is it accounted your part to cherish it most carefully, since it is also the source of your very being. And if the present misfortune has consumed other Italians with sorrow and overwhelmed them with shame, who will doubt that ye, who have been the cause of the strange eclipse of her who is like the sun, must be shamed and grieved? Thou more than all others, O Orsini,⁴

¹ "That even Hannibal, no less than others, would be pitiful." Petrarch, *canz. xl.*

² "Come and behold thy Rome, that is lamenting,
Widowed, alone, and day and night exclaims."

Purg. vi. 112, 113.

³ Sect. 1 and 2.

⁴ "Napoleone Orsini, friend, together with the Cardinal of Ostia, of the Colonna and the Ghibellines (Villani, viii. 80). Deceived like the other cardinals by the bearing of the man, he voted in 1305 for Raimond de Goth as pope. In a letter to Philip the Fair (Balut. *Vitae pp. Av.*, ii. 290) he says of himself: 'Oh, what deadly sorrows we have endured at the sight of what Clement V. has done — especially I, whose heart has been stung for the living and the dead because I brought this evil on them.' Cf. also Villani, ix. 81: 'Messer Napoleone Orsini, head of the faction that opposed the Gascons.'" (Witte's note in Torri.)

who so acted that thy colleagues,¹ who had fallen into disfavor, might not remain inglorious through thee; and that by the authority of the Apostolic See they might once again take up the revered banners of the church militant,² which they, perchance not deservingly but undeservingly, had been compelled to lay down. Thou also, thou adherent of the other Trastiverine faction,³ who so acted that the wrath of the deceased Pilate, like a branch grafted on a strange trunk, might fructify in thee, as if when thou hadst not yet despoiled conquered Carthage, thou couldst without any inconsistency manifest this spirit towards the land of the illustrious Scipios.

¹ The Colonna cardinals, James and Peter.

² "In 1304 Benedict XI. repealed the acts of Boniface VIII. against the Colonna, and in 1305 Clement V. restored Jacopo and Pietro to the dignity of cardinals; they were, however, without title, for Boniface had conferred their deaconcies elsewhere. Dante's reference, together with his circular letter to the Italian cardinals, prove that Balutius (*Vitae pp. Av.*, i. 654) was wrong in believing that the title of Sanctus Angelus was already conferred on Pietro before 1312." (Witte's note in Torri.)

³ "Perhaps Francisco Gajetano. Villani (viii. 80) testifies that at the conclave at Perugia he was especially invidious to the Ghibellines and the Colonna. In Amalricus Augerus's *Life of Clement* (Balut. i. 106) we read that in the consistory of Clement V. he opposed the Colonna rather by arms than by arguments. I think Dante mentions him as adherent of the Trastiverine faction because whoever sided with the Guelphs seemed to Dante to take from Rome and the Tiber their legal rights." (Witte's note in Torri.)

11. Yet the wound will be healed (though it cannot be otherwise than that the brand and scar of infamy will have been burned with fire upon the Apostolic See, and will disfigure her for whom heaven and earth had been reserved), if ye, who were the authors of this transgression, will all with one accord fight manfully for the Bride of Christ, for the Throne of the Bride, which is Rome, for our Italy, and that I may speak more fully, for the whole commonwealth of pilgrims upon the earth; so that from the palestra where the contest has already begun, and which is gazed upon from all the shores of the ocean, ye fighting gloriously may hear, *Gloria in excelsis*; and that the infamy of the Gascons, who while burning up with so dire an avarice strive to arrogate unto themselves the glory of the Latins, may remain to posterity as an example for all future time.

COMMENT ON LETTER IX.

●
For after him shall come of fouler deed

From towards the west a Pastor without law.

Inferno, xix. 82, 83.

FOR the first time in the history of Christianity Rome was deserted by the Popes. The city which held such power over the minds of men as the capital of the civilized world, though its glory had departed and its magnificence was buried deep in the dust

of the Middle Ages, was for a time no longer to be the abode of the Supreme Pontiff. With the close of the short pontificate of the calm and wise Benedict, the Babylonish Captivity, as it is so often called, began; and for more than seventy years no successor of St. Peter was to sit on the throne of St. Peter.

On the death of Benedict XI. a schism had arisen among the cardinals, and they were unable to come to a decision as to his successor. Two factions of almost equal magnitude divided the college: one, composed of the friends and partisans of Boniface VIII., was headed by his nephew,¹ Francesco Gaetani, and Matteo Orsini; the other, under the leadership of Napoleone Orsini and the Cardinal da Prato, sided with the Colonna and the King of France. More than nine months the uncertainty lasted; neither by compromise nor by intrigue were they able to come to any decision. The inhabitants of Perugia, where the conclave was held, grew impatient, and called loudly for a Pope. At last the Cardinal da Prato proposed a compromise by which one party was to choose three ultramontane prelates, from which the other was to make a final choice for Pope. Gaetani consented, and his party selected three, among whom was Bernard de Goth, Archbishop of Bordeaux, from whom apparently the Bonifacians had everything to hope.

¹ Milman says, brother.

He had had some personal quarrel with Charles of Valois; in the strife between Boniface and Philip the Fair he had been a firm adherent of the Pope throughout; Boniface had raised him from the small bishopric of Comminges to his present rank; and so it seemed as if he were allied with them in every way, through his animosities, his sense of gratitude, and his inclinations. But the wily Cardinal da Prato, the same who had been sent as papal legate to Florence by Benedict XI., knew the man thoroughly, recognized his thirst for honors and power, and saw that like all Gascons he was avaricious, and that his quarrel with Philip the Fair could easily be set aside. The cardinal's party was not obliged to make its choice for forty days. Forthwith he sent a messenger to Paris, post-haste, to notify the king, and to beg him to reconcile himself with Bernard de Goth, if he wished to regain his power in the church and to reinstate his friends, the Colonna.

Six days later an interview took place between the king and the Archbishop of Bordeaux in the monastery of St. Jean d'Angely, which is situated in a forest. First they heard mass together; then the king, after entreating the archbishop to be reconciled with Charles of Valois, introduced the main object of the conference. "See, archbishop," he said; "in my hand lies the power to make you Pope." Philip had six conditions to

propose, but the Gascon, covetous of the papal honor and stupefied by the dazzling prospect held out to him, threw himself at the king's feet, and promised everything: "You have but to command and I to obey, and it always will be thus." The king announced his conditions: I. His own full and complete reconciliation with the church. II. The absolution of all who had been his tools in his quarrel with Boniface. III. The tithes from the clergy of the realm for five years. IV. The condemnation of the memory of Boniface. V. The reinvestment of the Colonna in all the dignities and honors of the cardinalate, and also the election of certain of his friends to the same honor. The sixth condition he left to be revealed at the proper time and place.

The archbishop promised everything and swore on the Host, and moreover gave as hostages his brother and two of his nephews. He was elected to fill the papal throne on the 5th day of June, 1305, under the name of Clement V., and forthwith the papacy became subject to Philip the Fair. The haughty pretensions of Boniface VIII., who had insisted with such frequency upon the superiority of the spiritual over the temporal power, were forgotten; for the Pope was no longer even the equal of the King of France, but instead became the subject, the prisoner, almost the slave of Philip the Fair. The edifice which had been raised by Gregory VII. and his successors with such bitter

contentions for two hundred years, and which Boniface VIII. was the last to uphold, crumbled in the dust. Henceforth the Popes would govern, but not with the sense of power that their great predecessors had had. The vitality, some would say the divine origin, of the church was never so fully shown as in the fact that after seventy long years of degrading captivity, it could emerge and still retain its influence over the minds of men.

The first suspicion that the cardinals had that the Pope was not coming to Rome was when they were all summoned to his coronation at Lyons, which took place in the presence of the King of France and Charles of Valois, the King of England excusing himself from attendance. Immediately the Pope fulfilled his promises: he granted the king plenary absolution; gave him the tenths of the realm; restored the Colonna to their former dignity and honor; and created ten new cardinals, Gascons and Frenchmen, friends and creatures of the king.

Henceforth the college was to be French, and its Gascon and French members were to hold the power in their own hands. This done, Clement V. returned to Bordeaux; and in the spring of 1309 he retired to Avignon, which was hereafter to be the residence of the Popes.

The deeds with which the pontificate of Clement V. was filled leave an ineradicable blot upon the

history of the papacy. All authorities agree in painting his character in the blackest colors. A prisoner of the King of France, his whole reign was taken up either in submitting to his commands or in trying to elude them. He was almost obliged to condemn his predecessor for crimes of which he did not believe him guilty, and to accept a miserable penance, that perhaps was never fulfilled, from William of Nogaret and his accomplices, for the indignities which were the cause of Boniface's death. But the blackest deed of all this dark time was the sacrificing of the great military order of the Templars to the rapacity, hatred, or envy of the king. The persecutions, tortures, and horrible deaths of these brave men cause one's heart to throb with indignation and sympathy even at this distance of time. The one redeeming act of Clement's whole pontificate was in bringing about the election of Henry VII. of Luxemburg to the imperial throne, thereby thwarting Philip, who aspired to the honor, either in his own person or in that of his brother Charles of Valois, and thus saving Europe from falling under the dominion of the house of France.

On the afternoon when Du Molay, the Grand Master of the Templars, and his companions were burning at the stake, the former is said to have summoned Clement to meet him before the expiration of a year at the tribunal of the Most High.

In the next year, 1314, on the 20th of April, Clement died at Roquemaure on his way to Bordeaux, whither he was going in the hope of regaining his health. The papal treasure was robbed by his nephew, and from so great riches there was hardly a covering to be found for his body, which was treated with such neglect that one of the torches set fire to the catafalque, and it was partially burned. His remains were removed to Carpentras and there buried.

All Italy had suffered greatly from the absence of the Supreme Pontiff, but especially Rome. The other principal cities of Italy owed their importance to their commerce, and were distinctly commercial cities. Rome, not so advantageously situated, owed all to the traffic and the pomp of the papal court. The Eternal City presented a desolate appearance in these times. There was no government; the city was constantly distracted by petty quarrels and by the fierce and angry feuds of the Orsini and the Colonna. Classic Rome was in ruins; the Forum was filled with miserable dwellings; and many years would elapse before the Rome that we know to-day would rise from the débris. A letter of Cardinal Napoleone Orsini addressed to the King of France gives a dismal picture of the city and of all Italy at this time: "The whole city has gone to ruin through Clement; the throne of Blessed St. Peter, of our Lord Jesus

Christ himself, has been broken up and his patrimony despoiled, not by thieves but by its very governors. All Italy is neglected, yea, rent asunder by strife and sedition, so that the Christian faith could renew its lament in the words of Jeremiah."

Such was the state of affairs when the conclave met at Carpentras, the city near the place where the Pope had died, to elect a successor. Of the twenty-three or twenty-four cardinals who were assembled, six alone were Italians, — Napoleone Orsini, Jacopo and Pietro Colonna, Niccolò da Prato, Francesco Gaetani, and Guglielmo Lungo, — all the others were French, Gascons, or Provençals. The ardent desire of the Italian and especially of the Roman cardinals was to elect a Pope who would restore the papal court to Rome; deep remorse had seized them for having submitted to the election of Clement. The French joined with them, and they chose as their candidate William, Cardinal of Palestrina, a Frenchman and a man of high character.

The contest among the cardinals was hot and fierce. The Gascons, relatives and countrymen, with whom Clement had filled the college, were in the majority, and they insisted upon the election of a Gascon Pope. The Italians, mindful of Clement and their condition, held out. The time dragged on and no Pope was elected. Passions grew more and more fierce, until the strife communicated

itself to the adherents of both parties without the conclave. The Gascons attacked the houses of the Italian cardinals and pillaged them. The rabble cried: "Death to the Italian cardinals!" A fire broke out, which threatened the hall of conclave, and finally the cardinals, bursting through the back wall, fled in dismay. For more than two years the papal throne was vacant.

At last persuaded, almost compelled, by the King of France, the cardinals met at Lyons and there chose James, Cardinal of Porto, under the name of John XXII. Villani says that the election was by compromise, that the cardinals agreed to elect whomsoever the Cardinal of Porto should choose, and that he selected himself. He was of humble origin, the son of a cobbler, and in his youth had gone to Naples, where he was encouraged in his desire to study, and at last became instructor of the king's children. The young scholar manifested great ability. He was employed by the king, took orders, was appointed Bishop of Rheims by Boniface VIII., and while on a mission to Clement V. was made Bishop of Avignon, by means of letters of recommendation from the King of Naples, which, however, had been written and sealed with the royal seal without the consent or knowledge of the king. He was at last created cardinal for his valuable services at the Council of Vienne. He ruled as Pope for eigh-

teen years, until 1334. He was avaricious, and left at his death a treasure valued at eighteen million gold florins, and plate, jewels, and precious stones worth seven million more. Villani remarks that "the good man did not seem to remember the words of Christ: Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth. But perhaps we have said more than is befitting, for he gathered this treasure, so he said, for the Crusades." In addition to his avarice, John was harsh and cruel, and showed great delight in the downfall of his enemies; but nevertheless got up every night to say the offices and to study, and every morning said mass. Villani concludes: "He was small of person, stout and choleric, and easily moved to anger, wise in science and of an acute intellect. He made many of his relatives powerful and rich, lived ninety years, and was buried in Avignon; but afterwards his relatives removed all or part of his body to Cahors."¹

It must have been at about the time when the conclave first met, and when the issue of the contest was still uncertain, that Dante addressed his letter to the cardinals, beseeching them to elect an Italian Pope. In this letter is clearly shown Dante's disinterestedness, his anxiety for the welfare of his country. As a few years before he had

¹ Milman, *Latin Christianity*, Bk. xii. Villani, viii. 80, 81; ix. 59, 81; xi. 19, 20.

hailed the advent of Henry VII. of Luxemburg in a letter full of beauty, so now, forgetful of all party strife, he desires to see the Popes at Rome again. In all his bitter wrath against the sins of individual Popes, he still always manifests the greatest reverence for the throne of St. Peter, for the spiritual authority of the church. And who knows what new hopes may have arisen in his heart, weary with exile, at the thought of the reëstablishment of the papal court at Rome?

Where Dante was when he wrote the letter is a matter upon which we must be content always to remain in ignorance. Fraticelli conjectures that it may have been from Fonte Avellana, Pisa, or Lucca; but he adds that after all the locality is of small importance.

LETTER X.¹

To a Florentine Friend.

1. FROM your letter, which I received with due reverence and affection, I have learned with a grateful heart, and after diligent consideration, how dear to your soul is my return to my country ; and you have thus placed me under so much the greater obligations, in that it happens very rarely to exiles to find friends. But I will answer its import ; and if my answer is not such as perchance the pusillanimity of some might look for, I heartily pray that before judgment is passed it may be thoroughly submitted to the examination of your wisdom.

2. Behold then what in the letters of your nephew and mine, and also in those of many other friends, has been made known to me in regard to the ordinance but just now made at Florence relative to the pardon of the banished : that if I were willing to pay a certain amount of money and if I were willing to suffer the stigma of oblation, I should be pardoned and could return forthwith. In this, in very truth, there are two laughable

¹ [See Appendix.]

and ill-considered things, O Father. I say ill-considered by those who gave them expression, for your letter, more discreetly and advisedly conceived, contained nothing of the sort.

3. Is this then the glorious recall wherewith Dante Alighieri is summoned back to his country after an exile patiently endured for almost fifteen years? Did his innocence, manifest to whomsoever it may be, deserve this — this, the sweat and unceasing toil of study? Far be the rash humility of a heart of earth from a man familiar with philosophy, that like a prisoner he may suffer himself to be offered up after the manner of a certain Ciolo¹ and other criminals. Far be it from a man who preaches justice after having patiently endured injury to pay his money to those inflicting it, as though they were his benefactors.

4. This is not the way to return to my country, O my Father. If another shall be found by you, or by others, that does not derogate from the fame and honor of Dante, that will I take with no lagging steps. But if Florence is entered by no such path, then never will I enter Florence. What! Can I not look upon the face of the sun and the

¹ [See Witte, *Torris Ausgabe von Dantes Briefen*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, vol. i. p. 498. Lippus Lapi Ciolo was with others admitted to the city again on condition that he should walk behind the Carroccio with a fool's cap (*Schandmütze*) on his head. See also Del Lungo, *Dell' Esilio di Dante*, p. 137.]

stars everywhere? Can I not meditate anywhere under the heavens upon most sweet truths, unless I first render myself inglorious, nay ignominious, to the people and state of Florence? Nor indeed will bread be lacking.

LETTER XI.

To the magnificent and victorious lord, the Lord Can Grande della Scala, Vicar General of the Most Holy Roman Empire in the city of Verona and the town of Vicenza, his most devoted Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by birth, but not by character, desires a life, happy throughout the duration of many years, and a perpetual augmentation of his glorious name.

1. THE glorious renown of your magnificence, which Fame proclaimeth abroad on never resting wing,¹ leadeth different men to such opposite conclusions, that it emboldeneth some to hope for good fortune and driveth others to fear for their very existence.² Indeed, I once thought such a renown, too lofty for modern deeds, somewhat beyond the truth and excessive. But that a long uncertainty might not keep me in too great suspense, as the Queen of the East sought Jerusalem,³ as Pallas

¹ "Interes pavidam volitans pennata per urbem
Nuncia Fama ruit."

Æneid, ix. 473-4.

² "On him rely, and on his benefits;
By him shall many people be transformed,
Changing condition rich and mendicant."

Paradiso, xvii. 88-90.

³ 1 Kings x.; 2 Chronicles ix.

sought Helicon, so sought I Verona to examine with faithful eyes the things that I had heard. And there I beheld your splendor; and likewise I beheld and enjoyed your bounty. And even as at first I had suspected an excess in the reports, so afterward I recognized that the excess was in the deeds themselves. And thus it came to pass, that as before from hearsay alone I had been, with a certain subjugation of spirit, your well wisher, so on first seeing you I became both your most devoted servant and your friend.

2. Nor do I think I shall incur the imputation of presumption in assuming the name of friend, as some perchance might object, since those of unequal rank are united by the sacred bond of friendship no less than equals. For if one chooseth to glance at pleasant and profitable friendships, very frequently it will be evident to him that persons of preëminence have been united with their inferiors; and if his glance is turned to true friendship — friendship for its own sake — will it not be acknowledged that many a time men obscure in fortune but distinguished in virtue have been the friends of illustrious and most great princes? And why not? Since even the friendship of God and man is in no way hindered by disparity? But if this assertion should seem unbecoming to any one, let him hearken to the Holy Ghost, who doth avow that certain men have been made par-

participants in his friendship; for in the Book of Wisdom in regard to wisdom it is written: "For she is a treasure unto men that never faileth; which they that use become partakers of the friendship of God."¹ But the ignorance of the herd formeth judgments without discretion;² and even as it thinketh the sun is a foot in magnitude, so in regard to the one thing and the other it is deceived by its credulity.³ But to those to whom it is given to know the best that is in us, it is not befitting to follow in the steps of the vulgar: nay, rather, they are bound to oppose their errors; for as they are vigorous in reason and intellect and endowed with a certain divine freedom, they are held in check by no custom. Nor is this to be marvelled at, since they are not guided by the laws, but the laws by them. It is clear therefore that what I said above — that I am your most devoted servant and friend — is in no wise presumptuous.

3. Accordingly, preferring your friendship to all things, I wish to guard it like a most precious treasure with earnest forethought and studied care. And thus, since it is taught in the dogmas

¹ Book of Wisdom vii. 14.

² Cf. *Convito*, i. 11; see note to Letter i. p. 2; also cf. *Convito*, iv. 8: "The most beautiful branch that springs from the root of reason is discernment."

³ Cf. *Convito*, iv. 8: "For we know that to most people the sun appears to be a foot in diameter."

of moral philosophy¹ that friendship becometh equal and is preserved by some proportion, it is my sacred duty to preserve the proportion in return for the benefits conferred upon me. And on this account time and time again I have carefully looked over the little things that I could give you, and separated and examined them each by each, seeking the most worthy and pleasing for you. Nor did I find anything more suitable even for your preëminence than the sublime Canticle of the Comedy which is graced with the title of *Paradise*; and that with the present letter, as dedicated with a proper inscription, I inscribe, offer, and, in fine, commend to you.

4. In like manner my ardent affection will not permit me to pass over simply in silence, that in this gift more honor and fame may seem to be con-

¹ Aristotle, *Ethics*, ix. 1, *in init.* See also *Convito*, iii. 1 : "As there can be no friendship between those who are dissimilar, where we see friendship there must be likeness. . . . Whence we must know that (as the Philosopher says in the ninth of the *Ethics*), in the friendship of persons of unequal station, some mutual relation is necessary for its preservation which should reduce that dissimilarity as much as possible, as in the case of master and servant. For although the servant cannot render to his master such benefits as he receives from him, he ought, nevertheless, to return the best he can by such solicitude and promptness, that that which is unlike in itself becomes like by the demonstrations of good will, which show friendship, and confirm and preserve it."

ferred upon my Lord than upon the gift;¹ of a truth even in its title I have seemed, to those who have given the matter sufficient attention, to express a presage of the increasing glory of your name; and this is of design. But new to your favor, for which I thirst, and considering my life of small account, I will press forward to my proposed goal. Therefore, since I have completed the epistolary formula, I will attempt briefly, after the manner of a commentator,² to say something as an introduction to the work offered.

5. In the Second of the "*Metaphysics*"³ the Philosopher spoke thus: "A thing hath a relation to truth according to the relation it hath to existence," the meaning of which is this: that the truth of a thing, which subsisteth in truth as in its subject, is the perfect likeness of the thing as it is. Indeed, of those things that exist certain are of such a kind that they have their being absolute in themselves; certain others are so made that they have their being dependent on something else in a cer-

¹ *Convito*, i. 8: "Therefore, for a change in things to be praiseworthy, it must always be for the better, because it ought to be superlatively praiseworthy; and this the gift cannot be, unless it becomes more precious by its transfer; and it cannot become more precious unless it be more useful to the receiver than to the giver."

² [See Giuliani, *Le opere latine di Dante Alighieri*, ii. 184.]

³ A careful reading of the Second of the *Metaphysics* does not reveal this passage.

tain relation, as existing at the same time and being connected with something else; just as father and son, master and servant, double and half, whole and part, and things of a like sort, inasmuch as they are such, are related. And inasmuch as their existence is dependent on something else, it doth follow as a consequence that their truth will be dependent on something else; for if the half is unknown, the double is never known; and thus in regard to the others.

6. To those, then, who wish to give any introduction to a part of any work whatsoever, it is necessary to give some conception of the whole of which it is a part. Therefore, I also, wishing to write something in the manner of an introduction of the part of the comedy above named, thought something ought to be said first in regard to the whole work, in order that there might be an easier and more perfect entrance to the part. Six, therefore, are the things that are to be sought at the beginning of every doctrinal work; that is to say, *the subject, the agent, the form, the aim, the title of the book, and the kind of philosophy*. Of these there are three in which the part, which I have purposed to dedicate to you, differs from the whole: namely, *the subject, the form, and the title*; but in the others there is no diversity, as will be evident to whosoever examineth them. Therefore, for a consideration of the whole, these three things must be

examined separately; and when this hath been done, enough will be shown for an introduction to the part. Then we will examine the other three, not only in respect to the whole, but also in respect to that part which I offer you.

7. For the clearness, therefore, of what I shall say, it must be understood that the meaning of this work is not simple, but rather can be said to be of many significations, that is, of several meanings; for there is one meaning that is derived from the letter, and another that is derived from the things indicated by the letter. The first is called *literal*, but the second *allegorical* or *mystical*. [That this method of expounding may be more clearly set forth, we can consider it in these lines: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion." For if we consider the *letter* alone, the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses is signified; if the *allegory*, our redemption accomplished in Christ is signified; if the *moral meaning*, the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to a state of grace is signified; if the *anagogical*, the departure of the sanctified soul from the slavery of this corruption to the liberty of everlasting glory is signified. And although these mystical meanings are called by various names, they can in general all be said to be allegorical, since they

differ from the literal or historic; for the word *Allegoria* is derived from the Greek ἀλλοίος, which in Latin is *alienum* or *diversum*.¹

¹ Cf. *Convito*, ii. 1: "I say that, as has been stated in the first chapter, this explanation should be both literal and allegorical. And to understand this, we should know that books can be understood, and ought to be explained, in four principal senses. One is called *literal*, and this it is which goes no further than the letter, such as the simple narration of the thing of which you treat. . . .

"The second is called *allegorical*, and this is the meaning hidden under the cloak of fables, and is a truth concealed beneath a fair fiction; as when Ovid says that Orpheus with his lute tamed wild beasts, and moved trees and rocks; which means that the wise man, with the instrument of his voice, softens and humbles cruel hearts, and moves at his will those who live neither for science nor for art, and those who, having no rational life whatever, are almost like stones. . . . The theologians, however, take this meaning differently from the poets; but because I intend to follow here the method of the poets, I shall take the allegorical meaning according to their usage.

"The third sense is called *moral*; and this readers should carefully gather from all writings, for the benefit of themselves and their descendants; it is such as we may gather from the Gospel, when Christ went up into the mountain to be transfigured, and of the twelve apostles took with Him but three; which in the moral sense may be understood thus, that in most secret things we should have few companions.

"The fourth sense is called *anagogical* [or mystical], that is, beyond sense; and this is when a book is spiritually expounded, which, although [a narration] in its literal sense, by the things signified refers to the supernal things of the eternal glory; as we may see in that psalm of the Prophet, where he says that when Israel went out of Egypt Judaea became holy and free. Which, although manifestly true according to the letter, is never-

8. Now that these things have been explained, it is evident that the subject around which the alternate meanings revolve must be double.¹ And therefore the subject of this work must be understood as taken according to the letter, and then as interpreted according to the allegorical meaning. [The subject, then, of the whole work, taken according to the letter alone, is simply a consideration of the state of souls after death; for from and around this the action of the whole work turneth. But if the work is considered according to its allegorical meaning, the subject is man, liable to the reward or punishment of Justice, according as through the freedom of the will he is deserving or [undeserving.

9. The *form* then is double: the form of the treatise, and the form of treating it. The form of the treatise is triple, according to its threefold division. The first division is where the whole work is divided into three canticles; the second is where each canticle is divided into cantos; the third is

theless true also in its spiritual meaning, — that the soul, in forsaking its sins, becomes holy and free in its powers.”

Compare also the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas, Ques. i. art. x.

¹ Cf. *Convito*, ii. 1: “. . . in everything, natural or artificial, it is impossible to have *form* without a previous preparation of the subject which should take that form; as it is impossible to have the form *gold*, unless the matter, that is, the subject, be not first prepared and made ready.”

where each canto is divided into rhythms. The form or method of treating is *poetic, figurative, descriptive, digressive, transumptive*, and, in addition, *explanatory, divisible, probative, condemnatory*, and *explicit in examples*.

10. The title of the book is: "Here beginneth the Comedy of Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by birth, but not by character." And for the comprehension of this it must be understood that the word "comedy" is derived from *κώμη*, village, and *ψδῆ*, which meaneth song; hence comedy is, as it were, a *village song*. Comedy is in truth a certain kind of poetical narrative that differeth from all others. It differeth from Tragedy in its subject matter, — in this way, that Tragedy in its beginning is admirable and quiet, in its ending or catastrophe foul and horrible; and because of this the word "tragedy" is derived from *τράγος*, which meaneth *goat*, and *ψδῆ*. Tragedy is, then, as it were, a *goatish song*; that is, foul like a goat, as doth appear in the tragedies of Seneca.] Comedy, indeed, beginneth with some adverse circumstances, but its theme hath a happy termination, as doth appear in the comedies of Terence. And hence certain writers were accustomed to say in their salutations in place of a greeting, "a tragic beginning and a comic ending." Likewise they differ in their style of language, for Tragedy is lofty and sublime, Comedy, mild and humble, — as Horace

says in his "Poetica,"¹ where he concedeth that sometimes comedians speak like tragedians and conversely: —

"Interdum tamen et vocem comoedia tollit,
Iratuque Chremes tumido delitigat ore;
Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri."

From this it is evident why the present work is called a comedy. For if we consider the theme, in its beginning it is horrible and foul, because it is Hell; in its ending, fortunate, desirable, and joyful, because it is Paradise; and if we consider the style of language, the style is careless and humble, because it is the vulgar tongue, in which even housewives hold converse.² There are also other kinds of poetic narration: namely, the bucolic song, the elegy, the satire, and the votive hymn, as likewise can be seen in the "Poetica" of Horace; but of these at present nothing need be said.

11. Now it must be evident in what manner the part offered you is to be assigned. For if the subject of the whole work, taken according to the

¹ Verses 93-95: —

"Yet comedy sometimes will raise her note.
See Chremes, how he swells his angry throat!
And when a tragic hero tells his woes,
The terms he chooses are akin to prose."

CONINGTON.

² Cf. *Convito*, i. 5; also *De Eloquentia Vulgari*, i. 1: "We call that the vulgar tongue, which, without any rules whatever, we learn as children from our nurses."

letter, is the state of souls after death considered not in a special but in a general sense, it is manifest that in this part the subject is the same state treated in a special sense, namely : the state of the souls of the blessed after death. And if the subject of the whole work, allegorically considered, is man, liable to the reward or punishment of Justice, according as through the freedom of the will he is deserving or undeserving, it is manifest that the subject in this part is restricted, and is man, liable to the reward of Justice, according as he is deserving.

12. And thus the form of the part is evident in that assigned to the whole, for if the form of the whole treatise is triple, in this part it is only double, namely : the division of the canticle and the canto. The first division cannot apply to this, since this is a part of the first division.

13. The *title of the book* is also evident. For if the title of the whole book is : Here beginneth the Comedy, etc., as above, the title of this part will be : Here beginneth the Third Canticle of the Comedy of Dante, which is called Paradise.

14. Now that these three things in which the part differeth from the whole have been inquired into, the other three in which there is no variation from the whole must be considered. The *agent*, then, of the whole and of the part is he who hath

been named and who throughout appears as the agent.¹

15. The *aim* of the whole and of the part may be manifold; that is to say, near and remote. But omitting all subtle investigation, it can be briefly stated that the aim of the whole and of the part is to remove those living in this life from a state of misery and to guide them to a state of happiness.] *from here*

16. Now the *kind of philosophy* under which we proceed in the whole and in the part is moral philosophy or ethics; because the whole was undertaken not for speculation but for practice. For although in some place or passage it may be handled in the manner of speculative philosophy, this is not for the sake of speculative philosophy, but for the sake of practical needs; since, as the Philosopher saith in the Second of the "Metaphysics:" "practical men speculate somewhat now and then."] *to here*

17. These things premised, we must enter upon the interpretation of the letter, after something of a preamble; but first we must announce that the interpretation of the letter is no more than revealing the form of the work. This part, therefore,

¹ That Dante considered himself a prophet, an agent through whom valuable and eternal truths were to be stated, is evident in many places. Cf. *Convito*, i. 2: "First, any speaking of one's self seems unlawful. . . . The rhetoricians will not allow any one to speak of himself unnecessarily." See also *Purg.* xxx. 62:—

"When at the sound I turned of my own name,
Which of necessity is here recorded."

or the third Canticle, which is called *Paradise*, is divided principally into two parts: namely, into a *prologue* and a *principal part*. The second part beginneth here :

"To mortal men by passages diverse."

18. In regard to the first part it is to be understood that although it may be called an *exordium* in ordinary discourse, speaking properly it ought to be called nothing but a *prologue*; and the Philosopher¹ seemeth to allude to this in the Third of the "Rhetoric," where he saith that "the proem is the beginning in a rhetorical oration, as the prologue is in poetry, and the prelude in fluting."² It is also to be first noted that this preamble, which may ordinarily be called an exordium, is composed in one manner by the poets, in another by the rhetoricians. For the rhetoricians were accustomed to forecast what was to be said in order to prepare the mind of the listener; but the poets not only do this, but after it they also pronounce something of an invocation. And this is befitting in them, since they have need of a great invocation, inasmuch as something above the ordinary powers of men is to be sought from the supernal essences: a certain gift almost divine. Therefore the present prologue is divided into two parts; in

¹ Dante always refers to Aristotle as "the Philosopher," "the master of those who know." See *Inf.* iv. 131.

² *Rhet.* iii. 14, *in init.*

the first is forecast what is to be said; in the second Apollo is invoked. The second part beginneth here: —

“O good Apollo, for this last emprise.”

19. In regard to the first part it is to be noted that three things are required for a good beginning, as Tullius says in the “New Rhetoric,”¹ namely: that the auditor should be rendered well-disposed, attentive, and docile; and this is especially needed in a subject of the marvellous kind, as Tullius himself says. Since, therefore, the theme around which the present treatise turneth is marvellous, on that account these three things in the beginning of the exordium or prologue aim to recall one to the marvellous. For he saith that he will speak of those things that he saw in the first heaven of which he had power to retain the remembrance. And in these words all those three things are comprehended; for by the utility of the things to be said benevolence is excited;² by their marvellous character, attention; by their possibility, docility.³ He alludeth to their utility when he

¹ Cicero, *De Inventione*, i. 15.

² *Convito*, iv. 2: “If the hearer be not well disposed, even good words will be badly received.”

³ Cf. *Convito*, ii. 1: “But because in every kind of discourse the speaker ought to think of persuading, that is, of *charming*, his audience, and that which is the first of all persuasions, as the rhetoricians assert, is the most potent of any to render the listener attentive, the promising to relate new and great things,

saith that he is about to tell those things that are especially alluring to human desires, namely: the joys of Paradise; he toucheth on their marvellous character when he doth promise to say things so arduous and sublime, namely: the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven; he showeth their possibility when he saith that he shall speak of those things of which he had the power to retain the remembrance, for if he, others also would have the power. All these things are touched upon in those words where he saith that he had been in the first heaven and that he doth wish to relate of the Kingdom of Heaven whatever he had the power to retain, like a treasure, in his mind. Having then observed the excellence and perfection of the first part of the Prologue, let us enter on the interpretation of the letter.

20. He saith, then, that *The glory of Him who moveth everything*, which is God, *doth shine in every corner of the Universe*, but *in one part more and in another less*.¹ That he shineth everywhere, therefore I follow up my prayer for an audience with this persuasion, announcing to them my intention to relate *new things*."

¹ Cf. *Convito*, iii. 7: "And here we must know that the Divine goodness descends upon all things, otherwise they could not exist; but although this goodness springs from that Principle which is most simple, it is received in divers ways, and in greater or less degree according to the virtue of the recipients. Whence it is written in the book of *Causes*, 'The Primal Goodness sendeth His bounties unto all things in an affluence.' None the less

reason and authority likewise clearly show. Reason thus: Everything that doth exist either receiveth its being from itself or from something else. But it is evident that to receive its being from itself is not allowable save to One: namely, to the First, or Beginning, which is God. And since the act of being does not denote an existence of necessity *per se*, and since an existence of necessity *per se* appertaineth to One alone, namely, to the First or Beginning, which is the Cause of all things; therefore all things that exist, with the exception of that One, receive their being from something else. If therefore the most remote, or any entity whatsoever in the universe be taken, it is evident that it doth receive its being from something else; and that this, from which it doth receive it, oweth its existence to itself or to something else. If to itself, then it is first; if to something else, that in like manner doth receive its existence from itself or from something else. And thus it might be continued indefinitely among active causes, as proved in the Second of the “*Metaphysics* ;”¹ but since this is impossible, recourse

does each thing receive of this affluence according to the manner of its power and its being.”

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ii. (that is, Book i. the Less): “But, truly, that there is, at least, some first principle, and that the causes of entities are not infinite, either in a progress in straightforward direction, or according to form, is evident. For neither, as of matter, is it possible that this particular entity proceed

must be had to the First, which is God. And thus everything that doth exist receiveth its being mediately or immediately from Him; inasmuch as the second cause, proceeding from the first, hath influence upon the object caused in the manner of a looking-glass that receiveth and reflecteth the ray; since the first is the greater cause. And this is written in the book *De Causis*:¹ "that every primary cause hath greater influence upon the object caused from this to infinity; for instance, flesh, indeed, from earth, and earth from air, and air from fire, and this without ever coming to a standstill. Nor can there an infinite progression take place with the origin of the principle of motion; as, for instance, that man should have been moved by the air, and this by the sun, and the sun by discord; and of this that there should be no end. Nor, in like manner, can this infinite progression take place with the final cause, — that walking, for instance, should be gone through for the sake of health, and this for the sake of enjoyment, and this enjoyment for the sake of something else; and, similarly, that one thing invariably should subsist on account of another. And, in like manner, is it the case with the formal cause. For of media, to which externally there is something last and first, it is necessary that what is first should be a cause of those things which are subsequent to it."

¹ *Beati Alberti Magni Opera*, Lugduni, 1651, vol. 5, p. 567, *Liber de Causis et Processu Universitatis*, bk. ii. (*De terminatione causarum*) *Trat. i. cap. 5, in init.*: "Ex omnibus his facile probatur quod causa primaria universalis plus infinuit super causatum suum quam causa secundaria."

Cf. also *Convito*, iii. 2: "Every substantial form proceeds from its First Cause, which is God, as is written in the book of *Causes*, and it is not differentiated by this [First Cause], which is most simple, but by secondary causes, and by the matter into which it descends."

by it than a universal second cause." But this hath relation to being. •

21. Now in what relateth to the essence I demonstrate thus: Every essence except the First hath been caused; otherwise there would be many things which would exist of necessity *per se*, which is impossible. Whatever is, hath been caused either by nature or mind; and what hath been caused by nature, as a consequence hath been caused by mind, since nature is a work of mind. Therefore everything that hath been caused, hath been caused by some mind, mediate or immediate. Since therefore the virtue is inherent in the essence whose virtue it is, it doth proceed wholly from the essence that causeth, if this is intelligent. And thus, in the same manner as before it was necessary to go to the First Cause of being itself, so now recourse must be had to the First Cause of the essence and virtue. Wherefore it is evident that every essence and virtue proceeds from the First, and that the lower intelligences receive the light as from a sun and reflect the rays of what is higher than they to what is lower, after the manner of looking-glasses;¹ which Dionysius seemeth to touch upon clearly enough when he speaketh of the celestial

¹ Cf. *Convito*, iii. 14: "Here we must observe that the first Agent, that is, God, gives to all things of His power, either by direct rays or by reflected splendor. Wherefore the Divine Light shines directly upon the Intelligences, and upon others is reflected from these first illuminated Intelligences."

hierarchy.¹ And therefore it is written in the book "De Causis" ² that "every intelligence is full of forms." It is evident, then, in what manner reason doth manifest that the divine light — that is, the divine goodness, wisdom, and virtue — shineth everywhere.

22. Even as knowledge so likewise authority proveth. For the Holy Ghost saith through Jeremiah: ³ "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" and in the Psalms: ⁴ "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings, etc." And the Book of Wisdom ⁵ saith that "the spirit of the Lord filleth the universe;" and the forty-second of Ecclesiasticus: ⁶ "And the work thereof is full of the glory of the

¹ Dionysius, the Areopagite. Modern criticism now believes, however, that he did not write this work. See D'Ancona, *I precursori di Dante*, p. 23, note. "Ed. Ant. 1643, i. pag. 142, 143. Versio Corderii: 'Conclusum igitur a nobis, quomodo illa quidem antiquissima, quæ Deo præsto, est intelligentiarum distributio, ab ipsamet primitus initiante illuminatione consecrata, immediate illi intendendo, secretiori simul et manifestiori divini Principatus, illustratione purgetur et illuminetur atque perficiatur.' Cf. Albertum Magnum, I. 1, ii. 2, cap. 17, pag. 599." (Witte.)

² *Beati Alberti Magni opera, op. cit.* (p. 204, note 1) Tr. ii. cap. 21, in *init.*: "From what is said before it is easily seen that every intelligence which is in itself and in its substance intelligence, is active and full of forms."

³ Jeremiah xxiii. 24.

⁵ Book of Wisdom i. 7.

⁴ Psalm cxxxix. 7-9.

⁶ Ecclesiasticus xlii. 16.

Lord." And this is also confirmed in the writings of the pagans, for Lucan in his ninth book saith:¹ "Jove is whatever thou seest and wherever thou turnest."

23. Therefore it is well said, when the author saith that the divine ray, or the divine glory, *doth penetrate the universe and shine*. It *doth penetrate*, as touching the essence; it *shineth*, as touching the existence. Likewise what he doth append in regard to *more* and *less* is manifestly true, since we see one thing that existeth in a more exalted station and another in a more lowly; as is evident in regard to the heavens and the elements, the one of which is in truth incorruptible, but the others corruptible.

24. And after he hath premised this truth, he proceedeth to speak of Paradise, by circumlocution; and saith that *he was within that heaven which receiveth most of the glory of God, or of his light*. And from this it is to be understood that that is the highest heaven, [containing all bodies and contained by none, within which all bodies move, whilst it remaineth in sempiternal quiet and receiveth its virtue from no corporeal substance. And it is called the empyrean, which is the same as a heaven glowing with fire or heat; not because there is in it a material fire or heat, but a spiritual, which is holy love or charity.

¹ "Jupiter est quodcumque vides quocumque moveris." *Pharsalia*, ix. 580.

25. Likewise that it doth receive *more* of the divine light can be proved by two arguments. First, because it containeth all things and is contained by none ; second, by its sempiternal quiet or peace. In respect to the first it is proved thus : as containing, it doth hold a natural relation toward what is contained, like that of the mould to the plastic substance, as is held in the fourth of the "Physics."¹ But in the natural relation of the whole universe, the first heaven containeth all things ; therefore it doth hold to all things the relationship of mould to the plastic substance, which is to say, that it holdeth the relation of a cause. And since all power of causing is a certain ray that streameth from the First Cause, which is God, it is manifest that that heaven which hath more the nature of a cause receiveth more of the divine light.

26. In respect to the second the proof is as follows. Everything that moveth doth move on account of something which it hath not and which is the goal of its motion. Even as the heaven of the moon is moved on account of some part of it which

¹ "Dante seems to have referred to chapter 4, Tr. 35, where, according to Argyropulus, we read : . . . 'propterea quod continet (locus) videtur forma esse : in eodem enim sunt extrema continentis et contenti. Sunt igitur utraque termini, sed non ejusdem ; sed forma quidem rei, locus autem continentis corporis.' See also *De Coelo*, iv. cap. 4, Tr. 35 : 'Dicimus autem id quidem, quod continet, formae esse ; quod autem continetur materiae.'" (Witte.)

hath not that whereto it is moved, and because any part of it whatsoever, when its place hath not been gained (which is impossible), is moved to another, hence it is that this heaven doth always move and is never at rest, as it desires to be.¹ And what I say of the heaven of the moon is to be understood of all heavens, save the first. Everything, therefore, that moveth hath some defect, and hath not its whole being complete in itself. Therefore that heaven, which is moved by none, hath in itself, and in every part whatsoever of it, whatever it can have in a perfect measure, to such a degree that it requireth not motion for its perfection. And since all perfection is a ray of the First, which existeth in the highest degree of perfection, it is manifest that the First Heaven receiveth more of the First Light, which is God. Nevertheless this reasoning seemeth to argue to the confutation of the antecedent, inasmuch as it doth not prove simply and according to the *form* of arguing; but if we consider its *material*, it proveth well, because a sempiternal heaven is treated of in which a defect would

¹ Cf. *Convito*, iii. 15: "And the reason is this — that as every thing by nature desires its own perfection, without this it cannot be content, that is, blest; for man, whatever other things he may possess, without this would be filled with a desire which cannot co-exist with blessedness, because blessedness is a perfect thing and desire an imperfect, seeing that no one desires that which he has, but that which he has not, and here is a manifest defect."

be eternized. Therefore if God did not give it motion, it is evident that He did not give it material defective in anything.¹ And according to this supposition the argument doth hold by reason of its material; and a like manner of arguing is as if I should say, "If he is a man he can laugh;" for in all convertible propositions a like reasoning doth hold on account of the material. Thus therefore it is evident that when he saith, *Within that heaven which most His light receives*, he purposeth to speak of Paradise or the Empyrean Heaven.²

27. Likewise, in agreement with the foregoing

¹ See *Convito*, iii. 6: "Where we must understand that everything desires above all its own perfection; and in this finds every desire satisfied, and for this [end] all things are desired."

² See *Convito*, ii. 4: "However, beyond all these, the Catholics place the Empyrean Heaven, which is as much as to say the Heaven of *Flame*, or *Luminous* Heaven; and they hold it to be immovable, because it has within itself, in every part, that which its matter demands. And this is the reason that the *Primum Mobile* moves with immense velocity; because the fervent longing of all its parts to be united to those of this [tenth and] most divine and quiet heaven, makes it revolve with so much desire that its velocity is almost incomprehensible. And this quiet and peaceful heaven, is the abode of that Supreme Deity who alone doth perfectly behold Himself. This is the abode of the beatified spirits, according to the holy Church, who cannot lie. . . . This is the supreme edifice of the universe, in which all the world is included, and beyond which is nothing; and it is not in space, but was formed solely in the Primal Mind, which the Greeks called *Protonee*. This is that magnificence of which the Psalmist spake, when he says to God, 'Thy magnificence is exalted above the heavens.'" See also *Convito*, ii. 15.

reason the Philosopher in the First of the "De Coelo"¹ saith that heaven "hath a material so much the more exalted than its inferiors as it is the more removed from the things that are here." In addition to this can be adduced also what the Apostle saith to the Ephesians² of Christ: "That ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." This is the heaven of the delights of the Lord of which it is said against Lucifer by Ezekiel,³ "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty: thou hast been among the delights of the paradise of God."

28. And after he hath said that he was in that part of Paradise, he continueth with his phrases, and saith that he

... "things beheld which to repeat
Nor knows, nor can, who from above descends."

And he giveth the cause when he saith that "our intellect ingulphs itself so far" in its desire, which is God,

"That after it the memory cannot go."

For the comprehension of these things it must be understood, that when the human intellect is exalted in this life, on account of the natural relation and affinity that it hath to the separate intellectual substance, it is exalted to such a degree that after

¹ Aristotle, *De Coelo*, i. 2.

² Ephesians iv. 10.

³ Ezekiel xxviii. 12.

return the memory waxeth feeble, because it hath transcended human bounds. And this is suggested to us by the Apostle, where in speaking to the Corinthians¹ he saith: "And I know such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Lo then! when the intellect had transcended human bounds in its exaltation, it did not remember what had passed exterior to it. This is again suggested to us in Matthew,² where the three disciples fell on their faces, and afterwards told none of it, as though they had forgotten. And in Ezekiel³ it is written: "And when I saw it, I fell upon my face." And wherein these examples do not suffice for the invidious,⁴ let them read Richard of Saint Vic-

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4.

² Matthew xvii. 6, 7.

³ Ezekiel i. 28.

⁴ *Convito*, i. 4: "... equality, with the wicked, causes envy; and envy causes perverted judgment, because it will not permit reason to argue in favor of the thing envied, and the judicatory power then becomes like a judge who hears but one side. Therefore, when such people see a famous person, they immediately become envious, because they see themselves with equal members and equal powers, and fear that the excellency of the other person will cause them to be less esteemed, and thus they not only misjudge, being swayed by passion, but by their calumnies cause others to misjudge." Cf. also *Convito*, i. 11: "The envious man then argues, not by blaming him who speaks for not knowing how to

tor, in the book "De Contemplatione;"¹ let them read Bernard, in the book "De Consideratione;"² let them read Augustine, in the book "De Quantitate Animae;"³ and they will be disdainful no longer. But if they should rail at the ordering of so great an exaltation through the fault of the speaker, let them read Daniel,⁴ wherein they will find that even Nebuchadnezzar by divine inspiration saw something terrible to sinners, and then forgot it. For He "who maketh his sun to rise on

speak, but by blaming the material in which he works, in order (by disparaging the work from that side) to take away the honor and fame of the speaker; as he who should blame the blade of a sword, not for the sake of condemning the blade, but all the work of the master."

¹ "*De arca mystica, in quo de contemplatione, etc.*, lib. iv. cap. 12 (ed. Ven. 1506, 8): 'Quaedam namque ejusmodi sunt, quae humanam intelligentiam excedunt, et humana ratione investigari non possunt, et inde, uti superius jam dictum est, praeter rationem non sunt, etc.' " (Witte.)

² "*De consideratione ad Eugenium*, lib. v. (ed. Spirens, 1501, 4): 'Ad omnium maximus (viator), qui spreto ipso usu rerum et sensuum, quantum quidem humanae fragilitati fas est, non ascensoriis gradibus, sed inopinatis excessibus avolare interdum contemplando ad illa sublimia consuevit. Ad hoc ultimum genus illos pertinere reor excessus Pauli, etc.' " (Witte.)

³ "Cap. 76 (*Opp. Paris*, 1689, f. T. i. pag. 436): 'Jam vero in ipsa visione veritatis, quae septimus atque ultimus animae gradus est, neque jam gradus, sed quaedam mansio, quo illis gradibus pervenitur, quae sint gaudia, quae perfruitio summi et veri boni, cujus serenitatis atque aeternitatis afflatus, quid ego dicam?' " (Witte.)

⁴ Daniel ii. 3.

the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,"¹ — sometimes compassionately, for their conversion, sometimes severely, for their punishment, — more or less, according as it pleaseth Him, doth manifest His glory even to those who live evilly.

29. He beheld therefore, as he saith, some things

“ which to repeat

Nor knows, nor can, who from above descends.”

In truth, it must be carefully noted that he saith, *nor knows*, and *nor can*. He *knoweth not*, because he hath forgotten; he *cannot*, because even if he doth remember and retaineth the idea, words are nevertheless lacking. For we behold many things with the intellect for which the vocal symbols are wanting;² and Plato suggesteth this sufficiently in his books by the use of metaphors; for he beheld many things by the light of the intellect which he was unable to express in fitting words.

30. After this he saith that he will tell *whatever of the holy realm he had the power to treasure in*

¹ Matthew v. 45.

² See Canzone ii. in the *Convito*: —

“ Wherefore if my rhymes are defective

For that is guilty my weak understanding

And our own tongue, which has not strength

To encompass all . . . ”

That is, as Dante explains further on, iii. 3, the reason is that language cannot completely render account of that which the understanding sees.

his mind, and this he saith is *the subject of his song*; and of what sort and how many these matters are, will appear in the principal part.

31. Then when he saith: "O good Apollo," etc., he doth make his invocation. And this part is divided into two parts: in the first, in making his invocation he doth make a petition; in the second, he doth persuade Apollo of what he hath asked, first promising a certain reward. The second part beginneth here: "O power divine." The first part is divided into two parts: in the first he seeketh the divine aid; in the second he toucheth on the necessity of his petition, which is its justification; and it beginneth here: "One summit of Parnassus hitherto, etc."

32. This is the signification of the second part of the prologue in general. In particular I will not expound it at present; for poverty presseth so hard upon me that I must needs abandon these and other matters useful for the public good. But I hope of your magnificence that other means may be given me of continuing with a useful exposition.

33. Of the principal part, which was divided even as the whole prologue, nothing will be said at present, either in respect to its division or its signification, save this: that it will proceed ascending from heaven to heaven, and will tell of the souls of the blessed found in each sphere, and that true blessedness consisteth in knowing the

source of truth; as doth appear in Saint John¹ where he saith: "This is true blessedness, that they might know thee, the true God," etc.; and in Boethius,² in the Third of "*De Consolatione*," where he saith: "To see Thee is our end." Hence it is that many things that have a great utility and delight will be asked from these souls, as from those beholding all truth, in order to reveal the glory of their blessedness. And because when the Source or First, which is God, hath been found, there is nothing to be sought beyond (since He is the Alpha and Omega, which is the Beginning and the End, as the vision of Saint John doth demonstrate,³) the treatise draweth to a close in God, who is blessed throughout all the ages.

COMMENT ON LETTER XI.

THE SCALIGERI.

The mighty Lombard's courtesy,
Who on the Ladder bears the holy bird.

Paradiso, xvii. 71, 72.

THE heroic devotion to the cause of liberty, the ardent love of country, which characterized the cities of Lombardy in the twelfth century, and made their resistance to the pretensions of Frederic

¹ John xvii. 3.

² *De Consolatione*, iii. 9 (ed. Peiper).

³ Revelation i. 8; xxi. 6; xxii. 13.

Barbarossa one of the most remarkable in all the history of the strife for freedom against despotic rule, had already begun to wane and slowly die in the thirteenth century, when we find powerful families extending their power and retaining the government of the communes in their own despotic hands. On the 27th of September, 1259, Eccelino da Romano closed his bloody career amid the acclamations and rejoicing of the whole of Lombardy. For thirty-three years¹ not only the March

¹ Sismondi (*Républiques italiennes*, vol. iii. pp. 9 and 213) makes a strange mistake here. On p. 9 he says: "... l'élection de l'année 1225 fut favorable aux Seigneurs de Romano. . . . Alors le sénat, dominé par les Gibelins, revêtit Eccélin du pouvoir de podestat, avec le titre nouveau de Capitaine du peuple." On page 213, after speaking of Eccelino's character, he says: "Son règne de sang avoit duré trentequatre ans," and cites among his authorities *Rolandini Patavini Chronica*, and *Annales Veronenses*. The first (lib. xii. p. 50, in Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist.* vol. xix.) says: "Post hec in anno Domini 1227 (note: immo 1226), quam Verona communitur regetur, tamen scisma creverat. . . . alii fovebant partem Comitis de Sancto Bonifacio . . . alii em Salinwerre, que erat et Eccelini, et hi dicebantur Monteceli." The *Annales Veronenses* also place the year as 1226, and in speaking of Eccelino's death (Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist.* vol. xix. p. 16: *Parisius de Cereta*) says: "... ex quo vulnere idem d. Iserinus mortuus est 27 Septembris, et in arca marmorea sub scalis palatii castri communis Soncini sepultus est, et regnavit inter hostes viriliter dimicando annis 33." Sismondi seems rather to have followed the *Annales S. Justinæ Patavini*, which is in many parts taken from Rolandini, and which places the year as 1225. (Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist.* vol. xix. p. 152): "Anno Domini 1225 multi viri nobiles et potentes . . . et tunc primo pessimus

of Treviso and Verona but Lombardy itself had trembled at the sound of his name, and the country had been filled with people whom for one cause or another he had maimed or mutilated. In the joy following immediately on the death of the tyrant the inhabitants of the towns of the March of Treviso and Verona drove out his followers, deposed those whom he had placed in power, and threw open the doors of the many prisons which he had built and crowded with his victims. Treviso itself drove out his brother Alberigo, who took refuge in the castle of San Zeno with his whole family. But he was not long allowed to remain there in peace. An army headed by Buoso da Doara and Azzo, Marchese d' Este, and composed of the inhabitants of Mantua, Ferrara, Cremona, Verona, Padua, Vicenza, and Treviso, besieged him in his stronghold, which after four months was betrayed into their hands. Alberigo with his wife and children was put to death, and the fury of the people against the whole family of Romano was so great that they determined that not one of its members should

Eccelinus . . . incepit habere dominum in Verona." See also Litta (*Famiglie celebri italiane*, vol. i. article on the family of Romano), who also places the date as 1226. One great fault in Litta's magnificent work is that he never cites his authorities. For a most interesting and graphic account of this whole period consult *Rolandini Patavini Chronica*, in vol. xix. of Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist.* It is interesting for the English reader to know that Eccelino was placed in power by the Montecchi or Montagues, whom Shakespeare has rendered immortal.

escape.¹ It is at this period that the family of La Scala first comes into prominence. Its rule begins in Verona in the person of Mastino, who, although a follower of Eccelino, had escaped proscription, perhaps on account of the reputation for valor and wisdom that he had acquired while Podestà of Cerea in 1258, where we hear of him for the first time.²

Before this little or nothing can be ascertained of his family, whose origin, like that of so many other Italian houses, is veiled in darkness. The name of Mastino's grandfather, Sigiberto, has alone come down to us, but of the man himself nothing is known; and the same may be said of his father, Jacopino. It is not even certain whether they were of high or lowly extraction; although from the fact that Mastino had been Podestà of Cerea, whose statutes required the holder of this office to be native of the Republic of Verona and of high birth, it has been argued that his family must have been patricians; but this is not free from doubt, as Eccelino had overthrown the constitution and given the people the power of sharing in the government of the city. It has been stated that they were descended from a noble and powerful house of Bavaria, some of whose members came to Verona

¹ *Annales Veronenses, Parisius de Cereta*, in Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist.* vol. xix. p. 16.

² *Annales Veronenses, Parisius de Cereta*, p. 15.

in the twelfth century. The intense Italian spirit of Litta cannot brook such an idea, and he brands it as false without further ado. The name, however, of Sigiberto, or Sigisbert, which the first known member of the family bore, would seem to give a certain color of truth to this story. Litta says that the Scaligeri are to be found in Verona at a much earlier date, and mentions an Adamo della Scala who lived there as early as 1035; later, he goes on to say, others are to be encountered, both in the same and in the following century, many of whom held magistracies in the Republic. He is, however, unable to trace any connection between them and the Lords of Verona, and a doubt arises in my mind as to whether any ever existed. It seems to me far more probable that the two brothers, Bencio and Ongarello di Bonaventura della Scala, who were beheaded in 1247 by the order of Eccelino for complicity in the murder of the podestà, Enrico da Egna; and the two other brothers, Bonifazio and Federico di Nonardino della Scala, who were similarly punished ten years later, and who belonged to the order of nobles or *Ottimati*, were descendants of Adamo, while the Lords of Verona, between whom and the former Litta has found it impossible to trace any relation, and who are reputed to have come from the people, are of an entirely different stock. It seems likewise impossible to trace any connection be-

tween the famous Scaligeri of Verona and the families bearing the same name who lived in Florence and Bergamo. If so little can be discovered regarding the origin of the family, it is hardly strange that the origin of the name is also uncertain. A tradition exists that it was given because one of their ancestors had been the first to place a ladder against the walls of a stronghold during a siege, but to this as little credence can be given as to many another picturesque story that has come down to us from a more romantic and credulous age.

One of the first acts of the Veronese after quiet had been established was to abolish the office of the two vicars, which had been instituted shortly before, and to renew the ancient dignity of podestà, which was conferred first upon Mastino della Scala by his fellow-citizens in 1260, although such a choice was contrary to all custom. His year of government was most successful, and when with his consent Andrea Zeno of Venice was made podestà, in September of 1261,¹ to succeed him, he had greatly increased his reputation for kindness and sagacity. But too much credit must not be given to him on this account. Verona was ready for peace. Although the factions were not

¹ *Annales Veronenses, Parisius de Cereta*, p. 16. It is very unfortunate that Verona, although a town of so much importance, should have left such meagre accounts of herself at this time.

extinct, they were for the time being quiescent, for if one rejoiced over Eccelino's death, the other, with the memory of his many cruelties still fresh, could not bring itself deeply to lament his death.¹ With his mind forever fixed upon absolute power, Eccelino had soon abolished the government of the Eighty Nobles, or Ottimati, which had helped to place him in power, and had instituted in its stead a Council of Five Hundred, by which he hoped to delude the common people with the empty show of prerogative, just as he had done away with the condition of high birth which had formerly been necessary for participation in the government of Verona, and had made admission to the ranks of the new assembly possible to all who were native born. To the deliberations of this council Mastino was willingly admitted, as a true friend of the Republic, when his year of office expired; and it is greatly due to him, says Litta, that in 1261 all the old quarrels were forgotten, and by a public decree the gates of the city were thrown open to the Guelphs, among whom there were many patri- cians, who had remained in exile even after Eccelino's death.

Ludovico, the Count of San Bonifacio, — probably the son of Riccardo, who had been driven from the city by the Montecchi in 1226, — was the head and front of the Guelphic exiles, and made

¹ Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*, vol. i. fasc. xiv. tav. 1.

his entry into Verona, surrounded by his friends, amid the acclamations of the populace. He was a man of the greatest valor and experience, but he could not forget that he was a descendant of the old Counts of Verona, and his great ambition led him soon to aspire to the principal offices of the Republic in the hope of one day renewing the oligarchical form of government. The people in the mean time became alarmed, and following the example of other Lombard cities, called loudly for a leader who should defend them from such tentatives. This led the General Council of 1262 to establish the office of perpetual captain general, with the title of Captain of the People. For some time the assembly was uncertain as to whom it should choose to fill this position.¹ Finally the choice fell upon Mastino della Scala,² and from this dates the sovereignty of the Scaligeri, which lasted in Verona more than a hundred years. As may readily be imagined, the lofty pretensions of the Count of San Bonifacio were not at all gratified by the turn that affairs had taken, and it is not long before we find him forming a conspiracy, the last and most desperate expedient of a disappointed prince. The plot was discovered; the infuriated populace rose against him; and he and his whole party were driven from Verona on September 14, 1263, never

¹ Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*, vol. i. fasc. xiv. tav. 1.

² *Annales Veronenses*, Parisius de Cereta, p. 16.

to return,¹ although he did not cease to trouble the Republic for some years.

The Veronese were not disappointed in their choice of Mastino; and during the fifteen years² of his rule the city greatly increased in prosperity and power. All his efforts were directed to quelling internal dissensions and to promoting good feeling within the city walls. To this end he brought about marriages between hostile families, — an expedient which seems to us strange and not likely to be blessed with enduring success, but which nevertheless was frequently resorted to in the Middle Ages. He did not change the laws introduced into Verona by Eccelino da Romano, but turned them to good use; he found the Ghibellines dominant in the city, and allowed them to remain in power. "We must judge by the effects as to whether he chose well," says Litta;³ "for neither the arrival of Charles I. in Italy, nor the ruin of the house of Suabia, which was the consequence of it, nor the preponderance of the Torriani over the

¹ *Annales Veronenses*, p. 16: "Domnus Ludovicus comes Sancti Bonifacii cum omni parte sua et omnibus sequacibus eiusdem expulsus fuit de civitate Veronae 14. mensis Septembris. Et ex postea ipse seu ipsi comites Sancti Bonifacii numquam in civitate Veronae penitus redierunt."

² Parisius de Cereta, page 18, says that he ruled sixteen years: "Qui domnus Mastinus regnavit in dominio 16 annis vel circa." But according to the dates he gives this is manifestly wrong. Cf. also Litta, *sub* Mastino.

³ *Famiglie celebri italiane*, vol. i. fasc. xiv. tav. 1.

Visconti in Lombardy, ever succeeded in disturbing the peace of Verona." As Mastino was the only Ghibelline in the March of Treviso, all those who were persecuted by the Guelphs betook themselves to him for aid; and in this way he obtained several castles in the territory of Vicenza and Brescia. Already in 1265 he had recovered Trent, which six years before had withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Veronese; and had increased his reputation for prowess, besides making an opportunity to raise an army, by means of which the country round about was freed from the aggressions of the exiles, many of whom were allowed to return to Verona in 1269.¹ It was also in this year, according to Parisius de Cereta,² that Turrisendo di Torrisendi and Pulcinella delle Carceri, with other Veronese, went forth from Verona, seized many castles belonging to the Republic, banded themselves with Ludovico, Count of San Bonifacio, and made war against the state for more than two years. During this time they remained in possession of the castles, which were finally betrayed into the hands of Mastino. In 1272 Mastino, for his own advantage, favored the Bonacolsi, and contributed in great measure to their assuming the ascendancy in Mantua, where in the same year his brother Alberto was called as podestà by the grateful Pinamonte dei Bonacolsi.

¹ Litta.

² *Annales Veronenses*, p. 17. Litta says in 1268.

While Verona was increasing in power and importance without its walls, Mastino, with his usual sagacity, was not forgetful of the best good of the city itself. Indeed, the change that had come over Verona during the years of his rule must have appeared little less than wonderful to the Veronese, who had been for many years used to the horrible cruelties of Eccelino, who was never known to spare man, woman, or child, but mutilated, tortured, and put to death all alike. Mastino made laws to encourage and maintain the arts of silk and wool in a flourishing condition in a city which was a place of exchange, and which owed its prosperity to commerce; he introduced a better régime into the administration; in 1272 the Pretorian Palace was built, the adjoining church of San Sebastiano, and the edifice for the use of the Criminal Courts of Law. The great prosperity of Verona is doubly surprising when it is considered that during a great part of this time the city was under an excommunication, which seems to have produced no effect whatever, although it was not removed until 1278. There were two causes for quarrel with the Popes: one was the contests in regard to the rights of the clergy to elect their own bishop;¹ the other,

¹ As early as 1241, on the flight of the Bishop Jacopo di Brenganze, Eccelino da Romano had caused Manfredo, Mastino's brother, to be elected Bishop of Verona, notwithstanding the opposition of the Pope, who had prohibited any election whatso-

the reception accorded by Mastino to Corradino of Suabia in 1267, when he was called to Italy by the Ghibellines to aid them against Charles I. of Anjou. The second ground of discontent was more serious, for it had reference to a political question.

It seems strange that Mastino della Scala, who had done so much for Verona, who had twice escaped the snares laid for him by his enemies, should at last have fallen a victim to private hatred by the very temperance and wisdom which had so often been of service to him in former times. It is difficult for us, living at a time when greater self-control is exercised and in a more temperate climate, to understand thoroughly the fierceness with which all passions burned in Italy in the Middle Ages. A young daughter of the Pegozzi, who was much esteemed, both on account of her expectations and the importance of her relatives, and whose mother was a widow, a Scaramella dei Scaramelli, had been violated by a young libertine. Mastino had not hastened a sentence against the young man, hoping to save his life by bringing about a marriage, which would also save the honor of the young girl; his wisdom was looked upon as

ever during the absence of the legitimate bishop. On the death of Jacopo di Breganze in 1254, Alessandro IV. named in his stead Gherardo Cossadocca, who, however, was never anything more than bishop elect, as Manfredo clung to his post and died there in 1256.

coldness by the relatives, who murdered him, October 17th, 1277,¹ in a place which is still called *Vòlto barbaro*.

Immediately on hearing of his brother's death, Alberto hastened to Verona from Mantua, whither he had been called as podestà for the second time in 1275. He was received with great joy and proclaimed Mastino's successor by the people, and soon after by the General Council. His brother's murderers were punished; some of the Pegozzi and Scaramelli were put to death, others were banished and their property confiscated.² Unlimited authority was conferred upon him first by the people, and afterwards by the council, which in so doing violated every law. "It seems strange," exclaims Litta, "that the very people who fifteen years before had fiercely driven out the Count of San Bonifacio on the suspicion of attempts upon their liberty, should cry, 'Long live Alberto, absolute to-day and forever, — *Viva Alberto, assoluto oggi e per sempre*,' — and that afterwards the General Council should break every statute, past, present, and future." If any further proof were needed of Mastino's popularity, of the strong hold which he had obtained on the hearts and imaginations of an enthusiastic and impetuous people, no better could be forthcoming than this, in which they forgot their

¹ *Annales Veronenses*, p. 17.

² *Annales Veronenses*, pp. 17, 18.

most deep-seated prejudices, and partly in expiation of Mastino's murder, partly no doubt in gratitude for all he had done for them and for their city, made his brother his successor with most unlimited prerogatives. Their choice was more fortunate than it usually is in similar circumstances, and the prosperity of the city continued to grow year by year. In all the twenty-four years of Alberto's rule, not once was the internal peace of Verona disturbed. He seems to have possessed, perhaps to a greater degree, the wisdom and peaceful proclivities of his brother; but the exigencies of the times did not allow him to remain at home and govern the city in peace. In the very year after his accession to power (1278) he found himself at war with the Paduans, — who were aided by the Estensi, — because the Bishop of Trent had withdrawn from the ancient jurisdiction of the Veronese, and had surrendered his city to Padua. It was not long, however, before the bishop repented and returned to his allegiance. Peace was made in 1280.

Alberto, like his brother, was a Ghibelline, and like his brother he gave assistance to Ghibellines in distress, although he was an ardent believer in temperance and moderation. When in 1287 the Fogliani and the Canossa, who had been driven from Reggio by the Guelphs and were besieged in the stronghold of Tiniberga, near Sassuolo, implored his succor, he responded to their entreaties,

and brought about a peace between the contending parties. Again in 1293 the Rossi, who after having been driven from Parma had sought refuge in Verona, persuaded him to make an expedition to reinstate them. In this expedition, which had a successful termination, we first hear of Bartolommeo, Alberto's son and successor, who seems to have been sent as its leader.¹

The last war in which we find Alberto engaged was in 1294, against the Estensi, and had reference principally to the commerce of the Veronese; it was of short duration, for a peace advantageous to him was concluded in the same year. On this occasion, strangely enough, Alberto della Scala was allied with the Paduans, who alone seem to have looked upon him for the most part with jealousy and hatred: "not so much because he was of the opposite party," says Litta, "but because they believed he was the promoter of frequent tumults in Vicenza."

With the exception of the Paduans Alberto seems to have had no persistent enemies. The great esteem in which he was held and the confidence which was reposed in him are amply demonstrated by two facts, which unfortunately bring to a close the little that is known of his life. In 1289 Nicolas IV. empowered him to settle the dissensions that disturbed the peace of the monks of

¹ Litta, vol. i. fasc. iv. tav. 2.

Vangadizza; and in 1298 the Bolognese accepted his mediation in their quarrels with the Lambertazzi, Ghibelline exiles who had betaken themselves to Imola.

Alberto della Scala was a man endowed with attributes which are rare in any age, — how much more so at a time when temperance, moderation, a love of peace, were almost unknown, when passions burned fiercely, when every man was self-seeking and thought of his own interests to the exclusion of all else, when every city, though possessing a good government and many wise laws, stood armed against every other city. Unlimited power had been conferred upon him, first by the people, then by the General Council; but never, either in obtaining it or in maintaining it, had he been suspected of violence. He governed the city wisely. During his long rule the factions were at peace within the city walls; and so far as can be ascertained he never was guilty of any truly despotic action, unless his desire to retain in his own hands the appointment of the *podestà* — an office which had been robbed of many of its ancient attributes on the appointment of a Perpetual Captain — and his having named his son Bartolommeo as his successor, can be thus denominated. In the next century the Veronese had great cause to regret that they had ever parted with their liberty, but under Alberto's rule the yoke sat lightly on their necks,

and the city prospered. The population increased to such an extent that in 1286 it was necessary to extend the city walls for the first time since the days of Charlemagne ; the gates of the Vescovo and Campomarzo were opened ; the fortresses belonging to the Republic were restored and others erected ; churches were built, others were enriched ; new roads were opened up ; a new bridge was constructed. Nor was this all. It was to Alberto della Scala that Verona owed her celebrated commerce and her riches. He knew that an agricultural country was always a poor country ; consequently he encouraged industries and manufactures. He protected especially the art of manufacturing wool, which was practised by the order of the Umiliati, and allowed only the exportation of manufactured articles. He established also a tribunal of trades with the name of *Vicariato dei mercanti*, and erected a palace for its use.

But notwithstanding all his virtues as a prince it must not be supposed that Alberto was immaculate. He was guilty of one act which calls down a well-merited rebuke upon him from Dante, who puts the following words into the mouth of the Abbot of San Zeno, whom he meets in the fourth circle of Purgatory : —

“ And he has one foot in the grave already,
Who shall ere long lament that monastery,
And sorry be of having there had power,

Because his son, in his whole body sick,
 And worse in mind, and who was evil-born,
 He put into the place of its true pastor." ¹

Besides his three legitimate sons, Bartolommeo, Alboino, and Cangrande, each of whom succeeded him in turn in the government of Verona, Alberto had an illegitimate offspring, Giuseppe, who besides being deformed in body seems to have been equally deformed in mind, as all accounts agree that he led an evil and debauched life. Notwithstanding this, however, he was in 1281 made Prior of San Giorgio in Braida by a dispensation of Honorius IV. In 1292 his father Alberto, who in all likelihood regarded him with the peculiar affection that natural children many times inspire in their parents, forced the Benedictine monks of the monastery of San Zeno to elect him as their abbot, — a position which he held until his death in 1314.

When Alberto died in 1301, sincerely mourned by the Veronese, Bartolommeo della Scala, whom he had named as his successor, was confirmed in the General Council by acclamation. With his rule, which lasted only twenty-nine months, or until March 7, 1304, the period of Verona's peaceful prosperity draws to a close, and a more stormy and for a time a more brilliant era begins. But two events of importance seem to have

¹ *Purgatorio*, xviii. 121-123.

happened during Bartolommeo's short term of government. In his efforts to quell the discords of the Bishop of Trent, whose side he took against the Dukes of Carinthia, he came to an agreement which was in some way disadvantageous to the jurisdiction of the Scaligeri. It would be difficult to determine, says Litta, what supremacy the Scaligeri had had in a country where the temporal power had always been in dispute between the Counts of Tyrol and the bishop. The second event was his participation in the league which had been formed to reinstate Matteo Visconti as Lord of Milan, from whence he had been driven by the Torriani, — a political change in the most important city of Lombardy which severely threatened the Ghibellines. Although the attempt failed, it served to act as a check, and the peace of Verona was in no way disturbed by the Guelphs.

Bartolommeo was a prince of great sweetness of character, and like his father and uncle was peacefully inclined. Although he had wished to be buried quietly and had prohibited all funeral pomp, the ceremonies at his interment were magnificent beyond measure; the poor, to whom he had been kind, the entire population of the city, who loved him, followed his body to the grave. His brother Alboino, who was Podestà of Mantua in 1303, was immediately chosen to succeed Bartolommeo by acclamation, as the custom seems to have

been, and not by secret ballot, — a method which seems never to have been used. The Chapter of Verona had elected him Canon of the Cathedral in 1289, in order to show its devotion to his father, Alberto; and indeed the priestly garb would have been far more befitting to one of his timid and shrinking disposition than the arms of a soldier or the sceptre of a prince. His lack of force, to call it by no stronger name, is shown by the fact that in the self-same year of his election as Captain of Verona, he yielded the command of the army to his younger brother, Cangrande, whom he feared, and who, if there is no mistake, was at that time only thirteen years old.¹

Cangrande lost no time in making use of his newly acquired power, and in the very next year made his first essay in arms against the Guelphs in Lombardy. In 1306 Alboino joined the league that had been formed against Azzo d' Este, who had excited the jealousy of the Ghibellines by the relationship that he had contracted with Charles of Anjou, and Cangrande again led the troops of the Scaligeri. Peace was concluded on the death of the Marchese d' Este in 1308, and Cangrande was

¹ It is said that he was born March 9, 1291. This certainly coincides with the age that Dante gives him in 1300, the period of his fictitious voyage. See *Par.* xvii. 79-81 : —

“ Not yet the people are aware of him
Through his young age, since only nine years yet
Around about him have these wheels revolved.”

sent by his brother to help to reinstate Giberto da Correggio in Parma, and thence to preserve Brescia from the aggressions of the Torriani. • In the same year Alboino associated him with himself in the government of Verona, — a measure which was probably a mere form, as Cangrande, who despised his brother's timidity and thought meanly of his powers, must have been the moving spirit in the republic some time before this. The success which had attended his first attempts in arms bred in him a love of war and conquest, a desire for fame, which grew with his growth, and which kept Verona and Lombardy in constant turmoil during his life.¹ In 1309 we find Cangrande again in the field, — this time in aid of Alberto Scotti, who had joined the Ghibelline party and was sustaining the onslaught of the Torriani.

The following year was one of great rejoicing to the Ghibellines and in fact to almost all Italians. Henry VII. of Luxemburg, the newly elected emperor, had crossed the Alps with the avowed intention of settling all disputes, of pacifying all the warring factions, and of bringing all Italy to a state of peace. To this end he wished to place imperial vicars in all the cities, even claiming that the empire should be represented in the free cities by a person bearing this title, and

¹ His love of glory led him so far that he made a law that the word *peace* should never be pronounced within the city.

he demanded that all those who had been invested with authority by their fellow-citizens should resign it, and receive it at his hands instead. Alboino found himself on the horns of a dilemma. Should he show himself ungrateful to the Veronese, who had conferred the title of Captain of the People upon him? or should he expose the republic to the danger of a war? His lack of courage, his desire for peace and quiet, and most of all Cangrande's importunities and ardent love of the Ghibelline party, operated to make him choose the former course; and so having assembled the General Council of the city, he resigned the title and honors of Perpetual Captain. On payment of a large sum of money he was then made Imperial Vicar, together with his brother Cangrande, and the succession of the Scaligeri in the government of Verona was rendered as secure as anything could be in an age in which there was constant change, for by his act the Veronese had been deprived of the right of electing their lord. Somewhat later in the same year (1311) the Count of Ganzera, an exile of Vicenza, besought Cangrande's aid to wrest Vicenza from the Paduans. Cangrande, it may be justly believed, hailed with joy the opportunity of obtaining a town that his family had long been covetous of. He encouraged the rebellion, and then seized the city in the name of the emperor. The inhabitants of Vicenza, who

had been slaves for forty-six years, at first hailed the advent of the army of the Scaligeri beneath their walls with delight, but when they beheld their city sacked by the liberating troops and the castles of private individuals razed to the ground, while others were built on every side in the name of the empire, and lastly when they themselves were compelled to pay an enormous tribute to the emperor under the name of a gift, they perceived that they had not regained their liberty, but had only changed masters.¹

Cangrande della Scala, who had been present when the Emperor Henry had been crowned with the iron crown in Milan on the day of Epiphany, was on the point of embarking at Genoa to assist in the coronation at Rome, when the news of Alboino's death reached him, and he hastened forthwith to Verona. Alboino, says Litta, died on the 28th of October, 1311, with more of a reputation for goodness and uprightness than for administrative ability. Indeed, it is most interesting to notice how in this man some of the virtues which had been most conspicuous in his father and his uncle were turned into the corresponding weaknesses: how a desire for peace degenerated into shrinking and timidity; how a love of quiet became in him a want of determination, a lack of strength of character and energy. During his whole rule he seems

¹ Litta, vol. i. fasc. xiv. tav. 2.

to have been but little more than a figure-head, while almost from the first everything was left to his younger brother. Cangrande seems immediately to have associated Alboino's eldest son, Alberto II., with him in the government of Verona.

Cangrande's sudden recall to Lombardy was most providential for the cause of the emperor, who in instituting imperial vicars in the cities had decreed that the authority which emanated from the people should be declared illegitimate; a measure which gave rise to a daily growing dissatisfaction that was soon to break out into open revolt. Cangrande had barely returned to Verona, when in December he saved Brescia from the hands of the Guelphs, who had entered the town and caused it to rebel against the authority of the empire.¹ As, but a few months before, the taking of this town by the emperor had been effected only with the loss of many lives, — for besides those who were killed in the assaults many succumbed to a pestilence which broke out in the army,² — his gratitude was now accordingly great, and in reward he conferred the title of Imperial Vicar of Vicenza upon Cangrande in 1312. At the news of this, anger and consternation seized the Paduans. They had lost Vicenza; they feared that the next attempt would be upon their own city; they saw how favor-

¹ Giov. Villani, *Cronica*, ix. 32.

² Giov. Villani, *Cronica*, ix. 20.

ably the emperor regarded the Lord of Verona, and this caused them to break all their oaths of fidelity to him and to proclaim themselves openly as his enemies. On the 15th of February, 1312, with the aid of the Florentines and Bolognese, they drove out his vicar, and slew their own fellow-citizen Guglielmo Novello, who had been a leader of the Ghibellines in the city. This event gave Cangrande just the opportunity that he desired, and partly for the sake of his own aggrandizement, partly for the sake of the empire whose cause he championed, he determined to make war upon the Republic of Padua, and later upon that of Treviso, — a war which lasted with varying fortunes until his death, and which was only interrupted by treaties that were violated first by one side and then by the other.

It is impossible to follow the war with the Paduans here in all its details, or to give a full account of the acts of prowess of the Lord of Verona. On one occasion, when the Paduans had suddenly attacked Vicenza, gained possession of the suburbs of the town (1314), and threatened to take the city itself, Cangrande, who was absent in Verona, whither the news was brought him, threw himself on a horse, and followed by one man, rode to the beleaguered city, stopped only long enough to take a goblet of wine which a poor woman brought him, caused the gate of Liseria to be thrown open,

and burst forth upon the astonished Paduans with barely a hundred followers. The Paduans, who had given themselves up to pillage, made no resistance and fled in great disorder, leaving as prisoners several of their most prominent citizens, among whom was Albertino Mussato, the historian, and about seven hundred common soldiers.¹ Cangrande used every means in his power to accomplish his ambitious ends. He received and protected the exiles of both Padua and Treviso, and encouraged them with promises to restore them to their native land; and then in the hour of victory forgot the services they had rendered him and violated all his oaths to them. His power continued steadily to increase. On the death of the Emperor Henry at Buonconvento great discouragement had fallen upon the Ghibellines. His coming had been hailed with general acclamation, and he had held out such high hopes; but he had accomplished nothing: Italy was torn by as many discords as ever, perhaps by more. In this stress all Ghibellines naturally turned their eyes and their hopes to Cangrande, who, though chiefly occupied in the conquest of the March of Treviso, always rushed to carry fear and terror into the ranks of the opposing party wherever it showed itself. Only once, in the year 1318, his allegiance to his party seemed to waver,

¹ Sismondi, *Républiques italiennes*, vol. iv. pp. 393-398. Giov. Villani, *Cronica*, ix. 63.

and there were rumors of secret negotiations between him and King Robert, the leader of the Guelphs. The sagacity of Matteo Visconti, who had heard something of the secret treaties, alone prevented his suspected defection, for when a congress of Ghibellines was sitting at Soncino to elect a leader, he caused Cangrande to be chosen, and from henceforth there were no further fears in regard to his loyalty.¹

During all this time the war with Padua continued with unabated force, victory always following the banners of the Lord of Verona. Already in December, 1317, he had taken Monselici and Esti and a number of the strongholds belonging to the republic, and in the following February² had compelled them to accept his terms of peace and promise to admit their exiles within the city walls once more.³

¹ Litta, *op. cit.*

² Giov. Villani, *Cronica*, ix. 89.

³ [At this point the author's manuscript breaks suddenly off. He had added in his own hand the following note: "I regret exceedingly that I have been unable to finish this account. I thought better, nevertheless, to send it (to the Dante Society) even in its unfinished condition."]

DANTE'S FIRST RECEPTION BY THE SCALIGERI IN
VERONA.

THINE earliest refuge and thine earliest inn
Shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy,
Who on the Ladder bears the holy bird,
Who such benign regard shall have for thee
That 'twixt you twain, in doing and in asking,
That shall be first which is with others last.

Paradiso, xvii. 70-75.

As is the case with most of the few events in Dante's life of which anything is known, and in regard to which no actual documents have come down to us, many dates have been assigned to his first reception by the Scaligeri in Verona. The ancient biographers are peculiarly vague in regard to it. Boccaccio says simply,¹ that in the first days of his exile Dante went to Verona, where he was kindly received by Alberto della Scala. But Alberto died in 1301, and Dante was not banished until 1302. Leonardo Bruni is almost as brief. He says that Dante remained with the exiles at Arezzo until 1304, when the hope of regaining admittance to Florence failed him, and not wishing to lose more time, he departed and went to Verona. Among modern critics there is the greatest possible diversity of opinion, and various dates,

¹ *Vita di Dante*, edited by Macri-Leone, 1888, p. 28: "tornato da Verona (dove nel primo fuggire a messer Alberto della Scala n'era ito, dal quale benignamente era stato ricevuto)."

from 1303 to 1316, have been assigned to this event. As Bartoli has already pointed out,¹ in order to establish the date each one has founded his supposition upon the letter to the Cardinal of Ostia,² upon the Act of San Godenzo,³ and upon the battle of Lastra,⁴ instead of founding them first of all upon Dante's own words. When he meets his ancestor, Cacciaguida, in the Heaven of Mars, the latter says to him : —

“ And that which most shall weigh upon thy shoulders
 Will be the bad and foolish company
 With which into this valley thou shalt fall ;
 For all ingrate, all mad and impious
 Will they become against thee ; but soon after
 They, and not thou, shall have the forehead scarlet.
 Of their bestiality their own proceedings
 Shall furnish proof ; so 't will be well for thee
 A party to have made thee by thyself.” ⁵

No passage in the “ *Divina Commedia* ” has given rise to more controversies than this. It is evident from the first lines that Dante was with the other exiles in the first days of his banishment, but that after a time “ the bad and foolish company, all ingrate, all mad and impious ” turned against him,

¹ *Stor. della lett. ital.* vol. v. p. 165.

² [The first letter of this collection.]

³ [See above, p. 28.]

⁴ [A castle about two (Italian) miles from Florence. The centre of the unsuccessful attack on Florence made by the Whites, July 20, 1304. See Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 72.]

⁵ [*Paradiso*, xvii. 61-69.]

and he made a "party by himself;" and that not long afterward, it, not he, had the forehead scarlet. The questions to which these few lines give rise, and which cannot be answered satisfactorily, are numerous. What were the particular acts which made Dante call the Bianchi "all ingrate, all mad and impious"? What made them turn against him? How long was it after he was exiled? And to what does he refer when he says that not long afterward it (the party), and not he, had the forehead scarlet? In this dilemma no contemporary historian or chronicler is of much assistance, for no one of them mentions the facts at which Dante hints. Giovanni Villani, in telling of the banishment of the Bianchi, calls the party *ingrata* and *superba*. In his account, too, of the fight at Lastra he accuses the Bianchi of madness, and quotes the proverb: "Whom the gods would destroy they first drive mad."¹

Among the old commentators only the "Ottimo" and the "Postillatore Fram. Palatini" seem to know anything, and what they have to say is so enigmatical as to be of small use. The "Ottimo" interprets the passage as follows: It says that this evil company will weigh upon him more than anything else, and that his party will eventually turn against him. This came to pass when Dante opposed the plan of the Bianchi, — when they had

¹ *Cronica*, viii. 72.

been driven from Florence and were already fighting, — that they should ask friends for troops that winter, showing them why it would be of small advantage. When, then, the summer had come and they did not find their friends disposed as they had been during the winter, they visited much anger and hatred upon Dante, on account of which he left them. And this is what follows: that that party shall furnish proof of its bestiality. Indeed, they deserted, and were killed in great numbers in many places; both when they came to the city with the Romagnoli, at Piano, and in many other places, and at Pistoia and elsewhere.¹ The “*Pos-tillatore Fram. Palatini*” says the same thing with slight variations.² The other commentators do little more than paraphrase the lines more or less cleverly, and nothing is to be learned from them of any importance. Scartazzini believes that the line,

“They, and not thou, shall have the forehead crimson,”

¹ “Dice, che la mala compagnia di quelli della sua setta, con li quali elli cadrà, la quale è tutta ingrata verso Iddio delli ricevuti beneficii, tutta matta per soperchia prosperitade, ed empia senza pietate, li graverà più ch’altro. E dice, ch’essa si farà contra lui, la qual cosa divenne quando elli sè oppose, che la detta Parte Bianca cacciata di Firenze, e già guerreggiante, non richiedesse li amici il verno di gente, mostrando le ragioni del piccolo frutto; onde poi, venuta la state non trovarono l’amico com’elli era disposto il verno; onde molto odio ed ira ne portarono a Dante; di che elli si partì da loro.” Quoted in Scartazzini, *La Divina Commedia*, vol. iii. p. 465.

² Cf. Scartazzini, *La Divina Commedia*, vol. iii. p. 465.

refers to the defeat of the Bianchi at Castello Puliciano in 1303 and the battle of Lastra in 1304. Todeschini, who reads the line

"They, and not thou, shall have the forehead broken,"¹

says that it refers "to the shameful and decisive defeat of Lastra, which happened in July, 1304." But this reading of the line is devoid of authority; most of the codices and the editions read *rossa*, which if interpreted *red with shame*, as most of the commentators have interpreted it, means something quite different from *rotta*.

Bartoli,² who has reviewed all these facts, says that even if the phrase should or ought to be understood *red with blood*, it is not necessary to see an allusion in it to the defeat at Lastra. "The 'Ottimo,'" he continues, "speaks of Piano and Pistoia, where the Bianchi were defeated; and it could have mentioned several other places, as the Stinche in the Val di Greve, Montaccenico, and so on. Again, without referring to any particular battle, it might be understood that the party of the Bianchi would suffer severe defeats, — it, *not you*, who will have separated from it. But enough: I say that it could be understood so, but I do not think that it ought to be. The *letter* of the Dantesque verses is not opposed to this interpretation;

¹ [*Rotta* instead of *rossa*.]

² *Op. cit.* vol. v. chap. 10.

but the *spirit*, it seems to me, is opposed to it." He goes on to say that it would not be in accordance with Dante's strong and lofty character to say that the absolute defeat of the Bianchi did not concern him; to boast that he had taken no part in it. "Such an interpretation becomes all the more horrible, if it must of necessity be understood that Dante's words refer to the 20th of July, to those poor soldiers who, 'overcome by the heat of the sun,'¹ died of thirst, to those horsemen who were drawn up near San Marco 'with the ensigns of peace,' so that it was a fair thing to see. . . . I do not believe, then," he concludes, "that we can say that in 1302 Dante was with the exiles and that in 1304 he had separated from them. A rigorously objective criticism would say rather that it was not known when he began to make a party by himself. In the field of conjectures everything is permitted; but a conjecture should not be given as a certainty."

There cannot be the slightest doubt about the truth of all that Bartoli says. It is undoubtedly impossible to prove decisively that Dante was with the exiles in 1302, and had separated from them in 1304. Under these circumstances it is well to examine carefully all the facts in our possession in order to see what the probabilities are in regard to Dante's separation from his companions in exile,

¹ Compagni, *Cronica*, iii. 10.

since absolute proofs are wanting. As Bartoli says, "The 'Ottimo' mentions Piano and Pistoia, where the Bianchi were defeated; and it could have mentioned the Stinche in Val di Greve, Montaccenico, and so on." But if any confidence is to be placed in the "Ottimo," it is to be noticed that the first defeat of the Bianchi of which it speaks as having occurred after Dante left them is when they came to the city with the Romagnoli (*quando elli vennero alla cittade con li Romagnoli*), which proves without the shadow of a doubt, as Bartoli admits, that the old commentator had reference to the defeat at Lastra. Then according to the "Ottimo" Dante was with the exiles until 1304, or until shortly before the defeat at Lastra in July; and the other defeats, at Piano and Pistoia and elsewhere, occurred afterwards and are referred to in the following lines:—

"Of their bestiality their own proceedings
Shall furnish proof; so 't will be well for thee
A party to have made thee by thyself."

Bartoli goes further. He does not believe that the line¹ refers to any discomfiture of the Bianchi—the *letter* of Dante's verses is not opposed to such an interpretation, but the *spirit* is. It would not be in accordance with Dante's strong and lofty character to say that their absolute defeat did not concern him; to boast that he had taken

¹ ["They, and not thou, shall have the forehead scarlet."]

no part in it. And it must be confessed that it does not seem in accordance with what we imagine Dante's character to have been, that he should make such a boast after so many years had elapsed, and when his resentment against the "bad and foolish company" must in great measure have passed away. But why must *rossa* be supposed to mean scarlet with blood (*rossa di sangue*)? Most of the commentators have interpreted the word as meaning scarlet with shame (*rossa di vergogna*). In that case the line could still refer to the defeat at Lastra, and Dante would be exonerated from making a savage, a heartless boast. There can be no doubt that the defeat at Lastra was a shameful one, and due entirely to the mismanagement of the leaders of the Bianchi. The city was attacked when the heads of the Neri were in Perugia, whither they had been summoned by Benedict. Florence was poorly defended. The Bianchi arrived at Lastra before any knowledge of their coming had reached the Florentines within the walls. If they had pressed on that night they would have taken the city; but they encamped at Lastra to await Tolosato degli Uberti, who was coming across the mountains with some Pistoiese troops, horse and foot. When the next morning arrived, and he did not come, they pressed on as far as the Borgo di San Gallo, leaving the Bolognese at Lastra, and thinking to take the city

without drawing a sword. They formed on the Cafaggio, in a place where there was no water. A band left the Cafaggio and went to the Porta degli Spadari, which they took, and entered with their ensigns as far as the Piazza di San Giovanni. Here all the Guelphs were drawn up to defend the city, and a small force attacked the enemy and drove them back beyond the walls, with some loss. When the news reached Lastra the Bolognese immediately took to flight, and Tolosato degli Uberti, whom they met, was unable to turn them back, either by prayers or menaces. When the main army on the Cafaggio heard of this it became terrified, and on account of the great heat and lack of water the troops began to yield and flee, throwing away their arms as they went. Many were killed and many died of thirst, and some, who were taken, were hanged in the Piazza di San Gallo, and on the trees by the wayside.¹

Certainly if Dante does not refer to the fight at Lastra, it is impossible to interpret the line. It is not probable that he has reference to the taking of the Castello delle Stinche in the Val di Greve, as that does not seem to have been of enough importance to call forth such a reference. Nor can it refer to the taking of Pistoia, or Montaccenico, as long before that time Dante must have left the exiles, and made a party by himself ;

¹ Gio. Villani, *Cronica*, viii. 72.

for he must have wandered a great deal in the first years of his exile, if we are to believe that the prose part of the "Convito" was written between 1306 and 1308, as he there says (i. 3) in speaking of Florence, "Since it pleased the citizens of the fairest and most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth from her most sweet bosom, . . . through almost every part where her language is spoken I have wandered, a pilgrim and almost a beggar."

Del Lungo, whose authority on matters of Italian history is not small, interprets the first lines of Cacciaguida's prophecy very much in the way that I have indicated.¹ All the first part of the prophecy (verses 58-69) comprehends, according to him, (a) the Mugellan wars of 1302 and 1303, during which Dante was with the exiles; (b) the designs of the Cardinal da Prato in the spring of 1304; (c) the violent attempt at Lastra in the summer of 1304, to which and to the blood that it cost him it seems to him there is an evident allusion in the verse,

"They,² and not thou, shall have the forehead scarlet; "

(d) finally, the errors or faults that ruined the Bianchi and Ghibellines: namely, the razing of

¹ *Dino Compagni e la sua cronica*, vol. ii. p. 576 ff.

² [Del Lungo's note: "It, *ella*, is the evil company, abandoned by Dante, so it seems most probable to me, after the disastrous war of 1303,"

Montaccenico, the loss of Pistoia, and the unfruitful and ridiculous embassy of the Cardinal Napoleone Orsini, through which the proceedings of their bestiality furnished so good a proof as fully to justify Alighieri in having left them as early as 1303, — that is to say, in having abstained from participating in their designs and tentatives.

Scartazzini also believes that Dante left the exiles in 1303, as he thinks that the line,

“ They, and not thou, shall have the forehead scarlet,”

refers to the taking of the Castello Pulicciano and the fight at Lastra. But that it cannot refer to the former seems certain, as Dante would not have said that soon after (*ma poco appresso*) he left the Bianchi they would have the forehead scarlet, if he meant that more than a year would elapse. That, moreover, he was with the exiles until the spring of 1304, I shall prove farther on.

Cacciaguida, continuing his prophecy, says : —

“ Thine earliest refuge and thine earliest inn
 Shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy,
 Who on the Ladder bears the holy bird,
 Who such benign regard shall have for thee
 That 'twixt you twain, in doing and in asking,
 That shall be first which is with others last.
 With him shalt thou see one who at his birth
 Has by this star of strength been so impressed,
 That notable shall his achievements be.”

The question of the greatest importance to be answered in these lines is, who was *il gran Lom-*

bardo? All the commentators have interpreted them to mean that, after leaving the other exiles and making a party by himself, Dante found his first refuge and inn with the Scaligeri in Verona, — but with which one? When Alberto died in 1301, he left three sons, Bartolommeo, Alboino, and Cangrande. Bartolommeo ruled as Lord of Verona until March 7, 1304, when he died and Alboino succeeded him. In 1308 Alboino associated his youngest brother Cangrande in the government with him. As I have said, the old biographers are peculiarly vague on this point, and give but little assistance. The commentators, however, have said with almost universal accord that *il gran Lombardo* was Bartolommeo della Scala, although the other two brothers have also had their adherents.¹ If, however, Leonardo Bruni is to be believed, this statement is not without serious objections, for he says that Dante was with the exiles at Arezzo until 1304 (*e di speranza in speranza stettero infino all' anno 1304*), in which case of course he could not have been kindly received by Bartolommeo, who died in March of that year. Balbo,² who follows Troya³ in this as in most other cases, settles the difficulty by saying that

¹ For a complete list see Scartazzini, *La Divina Commedia*, vol. iii. p. 467.

² *Vita di Dante*, lib. ii. p. 215.

³ *Veltro allegorico dei Ghibellini*, Naples, 1856, pp. 115 ff.

Dante went to Verona in 1302 or 1303, as ambassador for Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi, to ask the assistance of Bartolommeo della Scala against the Florentines, and that after spending about a year there he returned to Tuscany in the early spring of 1304. But in this he relies upon the testimony of Girolamo della Corte, a Veronese historian of the latter part of the sixteenth century in whom but little confidence can be placed.¹ Another objection to the opinion that Bartolommeo was Dante's host is to be found in the lines,

"With him shalt thou see one who at his birth
Has by this star of strength been so impressed,"

because although Cangrande was associated with Alboino in the government, he was not thus associated with Bartolommeo, and hence Dante could not have said "with him shalt thou see." As Bartoli well says, this objection is not very serious: "There is no difficulty in admitting that Dante also mentions in these verses Cangrande, the brother of Bartolommeo, and says that he saw him in Verona, although as yet he took no part in the government." As for the correction of *con lui* to *colui* proposed by Dionisi at the end of the last century, and defended in this by Fraticelli,² both

¹ See Fraticelli, *Storia della vita di Dante*, pp. 242 ff.; also Bartoli, *Storia della lett. ital.* vol. v. p. 173; also Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni*, vol. ii. p. 580.

² *Vita di Dante*, pp. 238, 239.

Scartazzini and Bartoli have proved sufficiently that it cannot hold.¹

After dwelling on these various objections, and upon another, — that in the time of Bartolommeo the Scaligeri did not have the eagle upon their es-cutcheon, and only assumed it after the coming of Henry VII., when Cangrande was made Imperial Vicar, — Bartoli concludes that “we do not yet know with certainty either when Dante separated from his companions in exile or who the Scaligero was that first showed him hospitality. From this it follows that we can no more prove historically that Dante was not the author of the letter to Niccolò da Prato than we can prove that he was the author of it.”

Although historical proofs may be lacking, there are others, which, if not conclusive, are still strong enough to render it very probable that Dante did write the letter to Niccolò da Prato;² and these are contained in the letter itself. Witte, Torri, Fraticelli, and many others, have already insisted that the letter is authentic. Fraticelli says that although it does not bear Dante's name, there can be no shadow of doubt in regard to its authenticity; for besides knowing that he was the principal councillor of the Bianchi, while plans of peace were being considered, and in the other councils

¹ See also Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni*, vol. ii. p. 581.

² [The first letter of this collection.]

that followed, we find in this letter so much eloquence, so much love of country, that the Florentine exile is indubitably revealed.¹ To this Del Lungo replies, that when Dante scholars ascribe this letter to Dante on purely rhetorical grounds, he asks them for the historical proofs. To him the Dantesque coloring (*colorito dantesco*) is not a conclusive argument for its authenticity. And yet he ascribes a date to it on grounds far from historical, critical, or anything else but fantastic.²

Up to this point, so far as I know, no one has made a careful examination of the letter itself, or has sought to prove that it belonged to Dante by any but the vaguest methods, as, for instance, by its eloquence or by the love of country it reveals, — arguments which, it must be confessed, are extremely weak. It is unknown who the other eleven councillors were, as Del Lungo has pointed out, but it is only fair to suppose that they were among the leaders of the Bianchi, — men who may have had their share of eloquence, and a love of country as strong as Dante's. But however that may be, or notwithstanding it, there is plenty of evidence contained in the letter to prove its genuineness; in fact, it is rare to find so short a letter containing so many of its author's striking characteristics. A careful examination of Dante's Latin writings

¹ *Opere minori di Dante*, vol. iii. p. 413.

² *Op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 587.

reveals the fact that his vocabulary is almost as much his own as his subject matter. His use of such words as *ceu*, *igitur*, *prout*, *sane*, *quippe*, *tam* (followed by *quam*),¹ is peculiarly his own. There are, too, various constructions of which he is very fond: as, for instance, of the ablative absolute and of asking a question in various forms, to which he himself gives an answer, as "*et ad quid aliud enses et tela nostra rubebant, nisi ut,*" etc., in the first, and "*et quid aliud heroica sua signa dicebant, nisi,*" etc., in the second letter. There are also certain words which he uses again and again almost caressingly, as *discretio*, for instance. To this word he devotes almost a chapter in the "*Convito.*"² He calls "*discretion*" the mind's eye, without the light of which one "always, in his judgments, follows the popular voice, whether it be right or wrong"; in another place (iv. 8) he speaks of it as "the fairest branch that springs from the root of reason"; in still another place³ he says, "But the ignorance of the herd formeth judgments without discretion" (*sed habet imperitia vulgi sine discretione iudicium*); and in still other places he uses the word without any comment.

The next thing in the letter which strikes me as peculiarly Dantesque is the use of the metaphor

¹ As, "*sed semper tam debite quam devote,*" etc.

² i. 11.

³ Letter xi. paragraph 2.

of the bow and the thong: "*Quippe nostrae intentionis cuspis legitima de nervo quem tendebamus prorumpens, quietem solam et libertatem populi florentini petebat, petit, atque petet in posterum.*"¹ Dante uses the same figure in a number of places in the "*Divina Commedia*," besides using the word *saettare* frequently. A few examples will suffice. In his sarcastic outbreak against Florence (*Purg.* vi. 127 ff.) he uses it in a way which reminds one strongly of the passage in the letter: —

"My Florence! well mayst thou contented be
 With this digression, which concerns thee not,
 Thanks to thy people who such forethought take!
Many at heart have justice, but shoot slowly,
That unadvised they come not to the bow,
 But on their very lips thy people have it!"

Again (*Purg.* xxv. 17, 18): —

"Let fly
 The bow of speech thou to the barb hast drawn."

Again, in "*Purgatorio*," xxxi. 16–21, it forms one of his most beautiful similes: —

"*Even as a cross-bow breaks, when 't is discharged*
Too tensely drawn the bowstring and the bow,
And with less force the arrow hits the mark,
 So I gave way beneath that heavy burden,
 Outpouring in a torrent tears and sighs,
 And the voice flagged upon its passage forth."

¹ "In truth, the legitimate barb of our intention, flying forth from the thong that we have stretched, sought, seeks, and will seek in the future only the quiet and liberty of the Florentine people."

Again in "Paradiso," i. 119; viii. 103, he uses it, and in xvii. 55-57:—

"Thou shalt abandon everything beloved
Most tenderly, and this the arrow is
Which first the bow of banishment shoots forth."

But I have given enough examples to prove that the metaphor is one of which Dante is extremely fond, and one which he uses frequently, for there are other instances of it besides those that I have quoted.

The next thing that renders Dante's authorship of the letter extremely probable is the passage: "*Nec opis est nostrae, pater, nec quidquid florentinae gentis reperitur in terris: sed si qua caelo est pietas, quae talia remuneranda prospiciat, illa vobis praemia digna ferat.*"¹ This is a direct paraphrase of the "Æneid," bk. i. 600-605:—

"... grates persolvere dignas
Non opis est nostrae, Dido, nec quidquid ubique est
Gentis Dardaniae, magnum quae sparsa per orbem.
Di tibi, si qua pios respectant numina, si quid
Usquam justitia est et mens sibi conscia recti,
Praemia digna ferant."

It is safe to say that no other one of the twelve councillors was familiar enough with Virgil to

¹ "Neither does it lie in our power, O father, nor in that of whatever of the Florentine people is to be found on earth; but if in heaven there is any piety which provides a reward for such deeds, may it bestow a suitable recompense upon you."

paraphrase him thus, in an ordinary letter, no matter how great his eloquence and love of country. But, on the other hand, it is extremely natural to find such a paraphrase in a letter written by Dante, who looked upon Virgil as his guide and master: —

“ ‘ Now, art thou that Virgilius and that fountain
Which spreads abroad so wide a river of speech ? ’
I made response to him with bashful forehead.
‘ O, of the other poets honor and light,
Avail me the long study and great love
That have impelled me to explore thy volume !
Thou art my master, and my author thou,
Thou art alone the one from whom I took
The beautiful style that has done honor to me.’ ”¹

In addition to all this there is no writer of the Middle Ages known to me who has so much to say about liberty as Dante, or about justice and peace. In one place he makes Virgil say

“ He seeketh Liberty, which is so dear,
As knoweth he who life for her refuses.”²

In another place he refers to himself as a “preacher of justice.”³ In many places in the “Divina Commedia” he speaks of *justice* and *peace*, although it is frequently the justice of God and the peace that passeth understanding to which he has reference. The sentiments as well as the style of the letter, then, would not be inappropriate for Dante.

¹ *Inf.* i. 79-87.

² *Purg.* i. 71, 72.

³ Letter X.

From this superficial review of the letter, I think it will be readily granted that there is a strong probability that Dante wrote it. Historical proof is lacking, I confess, but internal evidence is in many cases almost as valuable. Leonardo Bruni is then correct. Dante was with the exiles until the spring or early summer of 1304, and was one of a council of twelve. Probably some disagreements arose while he served in this capacity, which caused him to leave them, and later on gave rise to lines sixty-one to sixty-nine of Cacciaguida's prophecy. In confirmation of the fact that Dante was with the exiles until the spring of 1304, we have also Farinata degli Uberti's prophecy:¹—

“But fifty times shall not rekindled be
The countenance of the Lady who reigns here,
Ere thou shalt know how heavy is that art.”

If, then, Dante was with the exiles at Arezzo or Forlì until after the coming of the Cardinal of Ostia to Florence in March, and until shortly before the battle of Lastra, he could not have been kindly received by Bartolommeo della Scala in Verona, for the latter died in March of that year. Hence *il gran Lombardo* must have been Alboino; and a strict and literal interpretation of the lines of the prophecy would make Dante go to Verona immediately upon his separation from the exiles, and there remain some time (for I can understand

¹ *Inf.* x. 79-81.

rifugio and *ostello* in no other way), probably between the summer of 1304 and August 27, 1306, when documents show him to have been in Padua.¹ Later on in the same year he was with Francesco Malaspina in Lunigiana.²

Among those who have given it as their belief that *il gran Lombardo* was Alboino are Pelli, Tiraboschi, Arrivabene, and Del Lungo. The last mentioned believes³ that the complete sense requires the following passage to be understood between the first and second parts of the prophecy (that is, between lines sixty-nine and seventy): "Up to this point you shall spend your life in the wretchedness and misery of exile, passing with hardship through the world,⁴ and entangled in the misfortunes of your evil and foolish company. But when the affairs of the exiles go from bad to worse from poor government, and they are dispersed, and never gather again,⁵ you, then weary of wandering from place to place, like 'a ship without sail or rudder, carried to different ports and harbors and shores by the dry wind that blows from grievous poverty,'⁶ will for the first time

¹ [See above, p. 89.]

² [See above, pp. 86 ff.]

³ *Dino Compagni*, vol. ii. p. 579.

⁴ [Del Lungo's note: "See *Dino Compagni*, ii. 25. Compare also the similar words of Dante in the *Convito*, i. 2."]

⁵ [Del Lungo's note: "See *Dino Compagni*, iii. 17."]

⁶ [Del Lungo's note: "See *Convito*, i. 2."]

find an honorable refuge, an easy inn, with the Scaligero

'Who such benign regard shall have for thee
That 'twixt you twain, in doing and in asking,
That shall be first which is with others last.' "

Why Del Lungo inserts precisely this statement he does not inform us, and I imagine he would find few to agree with him in that, or in much that follows. Following up his idea, he says that Dante was probably in Verona between 1306 and 1307, and remained until 1308. Then Dante's first host was Alboino. But this explanation is not without its difficulties, which Del Lungo recognizes and tries to explain away. How could Dante so praise Alboino in the "Paradiso" when in the "Convito" he found such fault with him? "There are, indeed, some fools who think that by this word 'noble' is meant that which is known and talked of by many; and they say it comes from a verb that means 'to know,' that is, *nosco*; and this is most false; because, if it were so, the things which of their kind were most known and talked of would be the most noble of that kind; and thus the obelisk of St. Peter's would be the most noble stone in the world; and Asdente, the cobbler of Parma, would be more noble than any of his fellow-citizens, and Alboino della Scala would be more noble than Guido da Castello di Reggio; whereas all these things are most false; and there-

fore it is also most false that 'noble' comes from *nosco*, but it comes from 'non-vile'; whence 'noble' is almost the same as 'non-vile.'"¹

"But," exclaims Del Lungo, "I can prove with certainty that this specious objection has no other foundation than an imperfect understanding of the text of the poem and of the 'Convito': inasmuch as the latter does not contain such blame nor the poem such praise as to contradict it. Is it blame to say (and Dante says nothing more in that passage of his treatise) that, since the nobility of men must not be measured by the frequency with which they are named, or by how well they are known, he would err who should call the obelisk of Saint Peter the noblest of stones, the noblest among the citizens of Parma Asdente, the divining shoemaker, and 'Alboino della Scala more noble than Guido da Castello di Reggio'? For each one of these statements, Dante adds, is most false. It is false, that is, that Alboino, though the actual head of the house of La Scala, the most frequently named and best known among the Lombards on account of his power and greatness, should on this account alone be held more noble than Guido da Castello, a simple gentleman, but who by his virtue alone had won no little fame. . . . But," Del Lungo concludes, "the comparison of the 'Convito' no more injures Alboino than

¹ iv. 16.

he is exalted by the appellative in the poem of *il gran Lombardo*, which was badly interpreted by the commentators as a personal laudation, when it was no more than an official title, so to speak, of lordship and power."

With this last I can thoroughly agree, but hardly with what goes before. As Bartoli has already pointed out, it is sufficient to note that Alboino was associated in Dante's mind with *Asdente*, the shoemaker of Parma.¹ Few, moreover, will agree with Del Lungo that the "*Convito*" was written shortly after 1300, before Dante went to Verona or was hospitably received by Alboino della Scala. But such inconsistencies as these different statements in regard to Alboino, if such they can be called, are not altogether rare in Dante's works. He himself tells us² that "the speech and actions of one age ought to differ from those of another; because certain ways are suitable to and praiseworthy in one age, which are unfitting and blameworthy in another." If Dante wrote the prose part of the "*Convito*" after his sojourn with Alboino, it is very natural that the latter's weakness of character and lack of nobility should have struck him so forcibly as to make him compare

¹ "Who now unto his leather and his thread
Would fain have stuck, but he too late repents."

Inferno, xx. 119, 120.

² [*Convito*, i. 1.]

him with Asdente, and unfavorably with Guido da Castello di Reggio, "the simple Lombard." When he wrote the passage in the seventeenth canto of the "Paradiso," on the other hand, Alboino had already been dead a number of years, time had softened Dante's remembrance of him, and he was again under obligations to the Scaligeri. His obligations to the proud and haughty Cangrande, with whom it may be readily imagined Dante often found it difficult to agree, doubtless caused him to remember with gratitude the elder brother's generosity.

APPENDIX.¹

THE older biographers of Dante were familiar with certain of his letters. Villani says (*Cronica*, ix. 136), "Among other things (he wrote) three noble letters: one he sent to the Florentine government, complaining of his undeserved exile; another to the Emperor Henry when he was at the siege of Brescia, reprehending him for his delay, and almost prophesying; the third to the Italian cardinals during the vacancy after the death of Pope Clement, urging them to agree in electing an Italian Pope; all in Latin, with noble precepts and excellent sentences and authorities, which were much commended by the wise and learned." Boccaccio declares (*Vita di Dante*, chap. xvi.) that "this worthy poet also wrote many prose letters in Latin, of which a number are still extant." Leonardo Bruni (*Vita di Dante*) describes Dante's handwriting, and states that he has seen

¹ For convenience in reference I give a numbered list of all the extant letters attributed to Dante. I. To the Cardinal of Ostia. II. To the Nephews of Count Alessandro da Romena. III. To Morcello Malaspina. IV. To Cino da Pistoia. V. To the Princes and Peoples of Italy. VI. To the Florentines. VII. To Henry VII. VIII. To Guido da Polenta. IX. To the Italian Cardinals. X. To a Florentine Friend. XI. To Cangrande. XII., XIII., XIV. To Margaret of Brabant in the name of the Countess Catharine of Battifolle.

letters of his: "He was, moreover, a perfect penman, and his writing was thin and tall, and very accurate, as I have seen it in several letters written by his own hand. . . . In Latin . . . moreover, he wrote many letters in prose." Of the contents of some of these letters Bruni gives us valuable information. One concerned the battle of Campaldino. "This battle Dante recounts in a letter of his. He says that he was in the fighting, and draws a plan of the battle." Another gives a reason for his banishment. "From this priorate sprang his exile and all the adversity which befell him in life, as he himself writes in a letter of his of which these are the words: 'All my evils and all my inconveniences had their cause and beginning in the ill-omened elections for my priorate — of which priorate although in wisdom I was not worthy, nevertheless in fidelity and in age I was not unworthy. For ten years had already passed since the battle of Campaldino, in which the Ghibelline party was almost entirely killed and destroyed. In this I was present, no child in arms, and I had much fear, but in the end the greatest joy, through the various fortunes of the battle.'" Bruni alludes to still other letters. "Dante, being received with much courtesy by the Della Scala, spent some time with them, and became exceedingly humble, endeavoring by good works and by good behavior to gain permission to return to Florence through the voluntary retraction of those in power. For this he took great pains, and wrote many times not only to individual citizens in the government, but also to the people, and among others a rather long letter which begins *Popule mee quid feci tibi.*" At the coming of Henry

VII., however, Dante did not hold to this purpose, "but arose with lofty spirit and began to speak evil of those in power, calling them criminal and wicked and menacing them with their due punishment through the power of the emperor, from whom he said it was manifest that they could not escape. But he still retained so much reverence for his native city that, when the emperor came against Florence and encamped near the gate, he was not willing to be present, as he wrote, although he had urged the emperor to come."

I do not know that other statements with regard to Dante's letters than these of Villani, Boccaccio, and Bruni have come down to us from the early biographers. Dante himself, however, once speaks of a Latin letter of his (*Vita Nuova*, chap. xxxi.): "After this most gentle lady had departed from this world, all the above-mentioned city remained as if widowed and despoiled of every dignity, wherefore I, still weeping in this desolate city, wrote to the princes of the earth somewhat of its condition, taking that beginning of Jeremiah, *Quomodo sedet sola civitas!* . . . Since the words which follow those cited are all Latin it would be contrary to my design if I should write them [here]."

Of the later biographers Giovan Maria Filelfo (fifteenth century) speaks of Dante's "innumerable letters," and quotes the opening lines of several: one to the King of Hungary, another to Boniface VIII., and a third to his son, who was studying at Bologna. Unfortunately Filelfo is not greatly to be trusted. In the middle of the same century there were extant at Forlì, according to Troya (*Del veltro allegorico di Dante*,

pp. 60, 125), a number of letters written by Dante to Pellegrino Calvi, secretary to Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi, and another to Cangrande in the name of the Florentine exiles. Whether such letters ever existed or not, they are certainly not to be found now.

Letters attributed to Dante were slow in being published. Letter VIII., most probably a forgery, appeared in Florence in 1547, in a book of selections by Anton Francesco Doni, *Prose antiche di Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, e di molti altri nobili e virtuosi ingegni*. In 1700 Letter XI. was published in Venice by Baruffaldi, and shortly afterwards reprinted by Venturi and others. In 1790 G. Dionisi of Verona, in the fifth number of his *Aneddoti*, p. 174, published Letter X. from a unique codex: "un Codice della Laurenziana, Plut. xxix., cod. viii., p. 123." Two other letters, however, V. and VII., had previously appeared in translation; the former at Rome in 1754 through P. Pietro Lazzeri, the latter in Doni's *Prose antiche*, mentioned above. In 1826 Troya, in his *Veltro allegorico di Dante*, published a part of IX. from a codex (cod. 8, Plut. xxix.) in the Laurentian. This led Witte to have the whole transcribed and printed in the *Antologia* (xxiii. 57). The following year, 1827, Witte issued a small edition, privately printed, of the letters of Dante then known: *Dantis Aligherii Epistolae quae exstant, cum notis Caroli Witte*. Besides Letters V., VII., IX., X., and XI., which had been already published, it contained the Latin original to VII., which Witte's great sagacity had helped the Marchese G. G. Trivulzio to discover, and IV., which had been found, through Witte, in the same codex as IX. and X.

In 1827 Witte, always on the alert, got word through a friend in Rome of a MS. in the Palatine (No. 1729), which contained nine letters of Dante: I., II., III., V., VI., VII., XII., XIII., and XIV. Of these VII. had already been published and V. had been long known in translation. In January, 1838, a copy of these letters was sent to Witte by his friend. In May Witte announced his discovery and described the contents of the letters (*Neu aufgefundene Briefe des Dante Alighieri*, in *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, Nr. 149-151; reprinted in *Dante-Forschungen*, i. 473-487). Unfortunately in September Witte's portfolio, which contained the MS. of these letters, in preparation for publication, was lost, and the getting of another copy involved a long delay. In the mean time his article had found its way into Italy through a French translation and had attracted attention. A certain Massi made a hurried transcript of the letters, but for political reasons found it hard to publish an edition. Meanwhile the authorities refused farther access to the MS. In 1840 appeared the first, and in 1841 the second, edition of Fraticelli's *Dantis Alighierii epistolae quæ exstant, cum disquisitionibus atque italica interpretatione P. Fraticelli*. This was substantially a reprint of Witte's edition of 1827, with the addition of a version from the French translation of his article of May, 1838. In 1842 Massi joined forces with Dr. Alessandro Torri of Pisa, who published the *Epistole di Dante edite e inedite* as vol. v. of his edition of the *Opere minore*.

Since 1842 no new letters of Dante have been found or published. There has, however, been much discussion

among scholars as to the authenticity of the fourteen already mentioned. A brief statement of the main questions with regard to each letter is given below.

I. This letter bears neither the date nor the name of the author. It is a courteous reply, written in the name of *A. CA.* and of the Council of the Whites, to Niccolò da Prato, sent to Florence as a peacemaker by the Pope.

But who was *A. CA.*, and why should we think the letter Dante's? Witte conjectured that the abbreviation stood for *Alexander Capitaneus*, that is, Alessandro, Count of Romena, and the name is usually thus given in the text. This conjecture was based on a statement of Bruni (*Vita di Dante*) that the captain of the exiles was Alessandro da Romena, and that Dante was one of a Council of Twelve. But, according to Bartoli, Scartazzini, and Todeschini, there is much that points against such an interpretation of the abbreviation. (1.) Absolutely no contemporary historian mentions any such "captain" of the exiles. (2.) Bruni elsewhere (*Stor. fior.* book iv.) says expressly that the Whites had no captain. (3.) A Count of Romena would not have been styled simply *capitaneus*, as is shown by similar cases in the same codex. (4.) Documents relating to the Counts Guidi nowhere hint that Alessandro was in Tuscany after 1300, nor is his name anywhere mentioned in connection with the exiles. (5.) The second letter, also attributed to Dante and addressed to the nephews of Alessandro da Romena, cannot be used in proof of a relation between the Count of Romena and Dante, for that very letter, as we shall see, is of doubtful authenticity. (6.) Even if *A. CA.* be Alessandro da Romena,

and if he were the captain of the Whites, is there anything in the letter except an alleged "Dantesque coloring" of style, about which experts disagree, to show that Dante was the secretary who drafted the letter in question? Is it not probable, finally, that Leonardo Bruni got his historical facts from the letter in question rather than that Bruni's statements go to establish the genuineness of the letter? The arguments on the other side are given their due weight above in the comments to Letters I., II., and XI.

II. This letter, without date and following in the same codex the letters to Margaret of Brabant (see below, XII.-XIV.), is addressed by Dante to Oberto and Guido, Counts of Romena. "Your uncle Alexander," says the writer, "was my lord (*dominus*)."

Would Dante have spoken thus of the Alessandro da Romena whom he mentions in very different terms in the "Inferno," xxx. 76 ff.? Were there two Counts of Romena named Alessandro? Both questions are fully discussed in the Comment to Letter II.

III. In the same codex, that of the Palatine, there follows an undated letter from Dante to Moroello Malaspina. It recounts a sudden attachment of Dante for a woman "by the streams of the Arno." What Moroello this was, what Dante's relations with him were, whether the sense of the letter is allegorical or literal, and whether the incident was or was not characteristic of Dante have been much discussed. The different points of view, which have a slight bearing upon the question sometimes raised as to the genuineness of the letter, are well brought out in the Comment. Gaspari (*Storia di*

lett. ital., tr. by Zingarelli, i. 459) sums up the matter excellently: "That Dante wrote to a prince about a love-affair would perhaps be surprising nowadays. But, in the first place, Moroello Malaspina was not a king, and moreover an exalted love was then a source of poetry and hence an important matter: the letter is a preface to the *canzone* which goes with it."

IV. This letter is found in the somewhat suspicious Laurentian codex, the same that contains the letter of Fra Ilario. It is without date and is addressed by "The Florentine undeservedly banished to the exile of Pistoia." The names Cino and Dante do not occur in the address or in the body of the letter, although the letter itself is entitled *Epistola D. de Florentia*. Its authenticity is not usually called in question. See, however, Scartazzini, *Prologomeni*, p. 385.

V. Without date, but addressed by Dante to the Princes and Peoples of Italy. It is contained in the Palatine codex and is uniformly considered authentic, except by Scartazzini, who grudges complete assurance (*Prologomeni*, p. 101).

VI. Dated March 31, 1311, and addressed by Dante to the Florentines. The genuineness of this letter is undoubted. It is probably one of those to which Bruni alludes (see above, p. 270).

VII. Dated April 16, 1311, and addressed by Dante to Henry VII. This is the letter which Villani mentions (see above, p. 269). With the exception of Imbriani (*Propugnatore*, xiii. 2°. pp. 229-233) no one has called in question its authenticity.

VIII. This letter, first published in 1547 by Doni,

has never been generally acknowledged to be Dante's, though it bears his name. It is addressed to Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna, dated March 30, 1314, and is written not in Latin but in Italian. The main arguments against its authenticity are the following: (1.) We have no other proof of the real existence of the letter than this alleged copy of it (Bartoli, *Storia della lett. ital.*, v. 246-248). (2.) The author ascribes to Virgil a quotation that is clearly taken from Claudian, not a natural error for Dante, who studied Virgil deeply and thoroughly. (3.) He gives to Guido da Polenta the strange titles *eccelso* and *serenissimo*, nowhere used by Dante unless in XII.-XIV., against the authenticity of which there is a strong presumption. (4.) It is extremely improbable that Dante was in Ravenna in 1313 or very early in 1314. (5.) Even if he had been, Guido da Polenta was then not Lord of Ravenna, but Podestà of Casena. (6.) Even if Dante had come to Ravenna in 1313 or early in 1314, and if Guido da Polenta had then been Lord of Ravenna, Dante could not have been sent to Venice to congratulate a new Doge, for there was no new Doge elected from 1312 to 1328.

IX. This letter, undated, and addressed by Dante to the Italian Cardinals, is probably that referred to by Villani. It is curious that its beginning is identical with that of the letter to "the princes of the earth" which Dante mentions in the *Vita Nuova*. The fact that the letter is contained in the suspicious Laurentian MS., as well as slight coincidences between its language and that of a *canzone* of Petrarch and a letter of Cola di Rienzo, have laid it open to slight suspicion.

X. Undated and addressed to a certain Padre whose nephew was also Dante's nephew. Bartoli, Scartazzini, and others doubt its authenticity. Their main arguments are the following: (1) The strange silence of Villani and of Dante himself on an incident of such importance; (2) the fact that the letter occurs, and occurs only, in the suspicious Laurentian codex, which probably once belonged to Boccaccio; (3) certain peculiar correspondences between the language of the letter and that of Boccaccio's *Vita*; (4) a lack of reserve and looseness of expression which are not characteristic of Dante. This last point is best brought out in Scartazzini's *Ein Capitel aus dem Dante-Roman*, in the *Revue Helvétique*, 1890.

XI. This letter, the longest and most important of all, is without date and addressed to Cangrande della Scala. Several attempts have been made to throw doubts on its authenticity. The points most often urged are: (1) The absence of old MSS. of it; (2) the silence of Boccaccio and the older commentators with regard to it, although in Boccaccio's commentary there are passages identical with parts of this letter; (3) here and there phrases — in the epithets applied to Cangrande, for instance — which seem to contradict supposed facts. The authenticity of the letter, however, may be regarded as fully demonstrated by Giuliani, *Opere minore di Dante*, ii. 170 ff.

XII.-XIV. These letters from the Countess of Batti-folle to Margaret of Brabant have sometimes been supposed to have been written by Dante, because they occur in the Palatine codex, among other letters of his and

with the *De Monarchia*. But there is nothing in their style or contents to affirm that the Countess of Battifolle had so lofty a secretary. Slight correspondences between the language of these letters and that of others known to be Dante's seem merely to arise from the common Latin phraseology of the time. For the text of these letters see Giuliani, *Opere minore di Dante*, ii. 69–71. They are excellently translated in Kannegiesser's *Dante Alighieri's prosaische Schriften* (Leipzig, 1845), ii. 193–198.

The two Latin eclogues addressed by Dante to Giovanni del Virgilio, although strictly letters, are really poetical and rhetorical exercises. Their authenticity is sometimes admitted, sometimes denied, and the discussion, although interesting, would not here be appropriate. The best authorities on the subject are referred to by Gaspary, *Storia della lett. ital.*, tr. by Zingarelli, i. 462, n. 253.

No account of Dante's Letters, however brief, is complete without an account of the famous letter of Fra Ilario, long held to be genuine but recently proved conclusively to be an imposture. The contents and character of the letter as well as the chief points that tell against it are best indicated in the words of a recent review in the *Nation* (October 16, 1890), the authorship of which cannot be unknown to the English or American student of Dante.

“The Letter is in Latin, and purports to be addressed to the illustrious Ghibelline leader, Uguccione della Faggiuola, by a brother of the Monastery of Santa Croce del Corvo. It describes a visit of Dante to the monas-

tery, and narrates at considerable length a conversation with him concerning his poem. The most striking passage of the letter is familiar to all readers about Dante. It runs as follows :¹

“Hither he came, passing through the diocese of Luni, moved either by the religion of the place, or by some other feeling. And seeing him, as yet unknown to me and to all my brethren, I questioned him of his wishings and his seekings there. He moved not; but stood silently contemplating the columns and arches of the cloister. And again I asked him what he wished, and whom he sought. Then, slowly turning his head, and looking at the friars and at me, he answered : “Peace !””

“The romantic character of this description is fitted to excite suspicion, so much is it in the style of that story-telling of which Boccaccio was the chief master in the middle of the fourteenth century. And the suspicion is quickened by the circumstance that the Letter is found in but a single codex, made up like a scrap-book, of various short pieces, and that this codex originally belonged to Boccaccio. Moreover there is a passage in the Letter in which the writer pretends to give in Dante’s own words his reasons for writing the *Divine Comedy* in Italian rather than in Latin, and this passage is so similar to that in Boccaccio’s *Life* of the poet, which deals with the same subject (in great part being identical with it in phrase), that there can be no doubt either that both were written by one author, or that one is the direct source of the other. Furthermore Fra Ilario cites two verses and

¹ I have quoted from Mr. Longfellow’s version in the *Illustrations* to his translation.

a half of a beginning of the poem in Latin, which, as he says, Dante repeated to him. The same verses and no more are given by Boccaccio in the *Life*. It seems impossible to doubt either that Boccaccio had at hand this Letter at the time he wrote the *Life* or that the Letter is of later date than the *Life*, and consequently not a narrative written at the time of the supposed visit of Dante to the monastery. But there is still another consideration which bears on the matter. In the *Life* Boccaccio states that it was Dante's intention, according to the report of some persons — *secondo il ragionare d'alcuno* — to dedicate the three parts of his poem respectively to Ugucione della Faggiuola, Moroello Malaspina, and Frederick III., King of Sicily. Others, he adds, maintain that he dedicated the whole to Cane della Scala; 'but which of these opinions is the truth is uncertain, for we have no evidence but the opinion of different persons (*il volontario ragionare di diversi*).' Now in the Fra Ilario Letter the writer states that Dante told him that he proposed to dedicate the three parts of his poem to the three named personages. If, then, the Letter had been genuine, in which case, as we have seen, Boccaccio had it before him when writing the *Life*, he could scarcely have said that there was no evidence concerning Dante's purpose except *il volontario ragionare* of different persons.

"These facts and others of like nature lead to the conclusion that the Letter is not what it purports to be, but is a fancy piece not improbably composed by Boccaccio himself. And this evidence is confirmed by the internal evidence afforded by the character ascribed in it to

Dante. It is a conclusion eminently satisfactory to one who, from study of Dante's works, has so learned to know their author that he finds it difficult to conceive of him as he is represented in the Letter. He was, if we trust his own evidence as well as that of Villani, *schifo e disdegnoso*, not a man to wear his heart upon his sleeve, to expand in ready confidence to a stranger, and to exhibit the affectations of a sentimentalism such as might be appropriate to a later and feebler generation — the generation of Petrarch and Boccaccio. The whole account lacks verisimilitude. It is a piece that shows more of the author of the *Decameron* than of the *Divine Comedy*.

"Signor Macri-Leone has lately promised a full investigation of the Fra Ilario fiction. It will be looked for with interest, though there is so little need of confirmation of its apocryphal character that Scartazzini, in his recent valuable but disappointing volume of *Prolegomena* to the *Divine Comedy*, dismisses it without ceremony as 'a silly and ridiculous imposture.'"

A new and definitive edition of Dante's letters,¹ prepared under the auspices of the Italian Dante Society, has recently been promised us. From the above discussion of the Fra Ilario letter and several letters in the same codex ascribed to Dante the student will notice how indispensable it is that such an edition should be based upon a minute examination of the Palatine (Vatican) and the Laurentian codices. "The intrinsic character of both," says Renier (*Giornale Storico*, ii. 113), "is the same, and that character is well suspected of being that of a humanist's scrap-book."

¹ The best now existing is that of Giuliani.

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